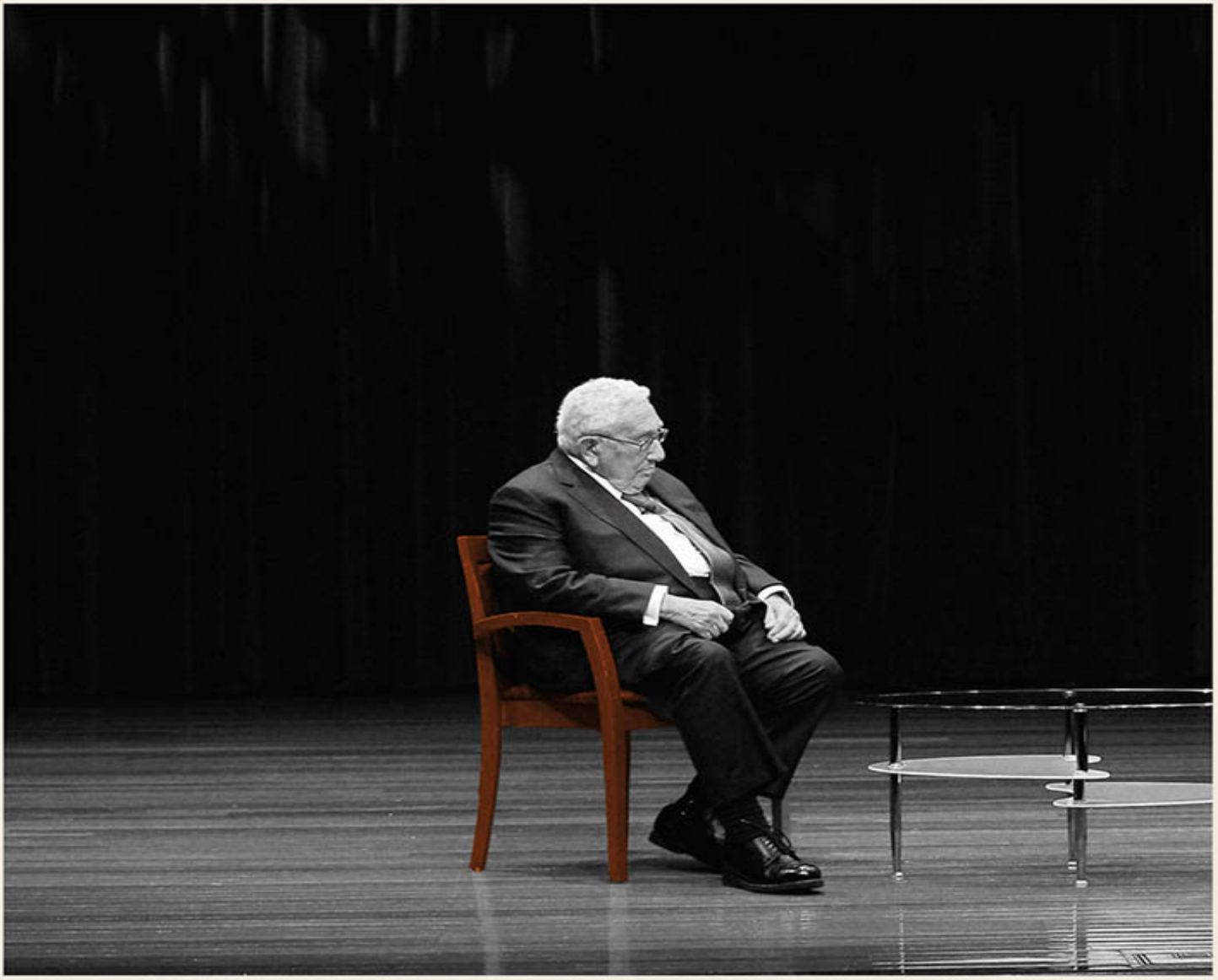
EDITED BY RENÉ ROJAS, BHASKAR SUNKARA, AND JONAH WALTERS

THE GOOD DIE YOUNG

INTRODUCTION BY GREG GRANDIN

THE VERDICT ON HENRY KISSINGER



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René Rojas, Bhaskar Sunkara,
and Jonah Walters

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Preface

If you're reading this, Henry Kissinger is dead. The media mill is already churning out fiery denouncements and warm remembrances in equal measure. Perhaps no other figure in twentieth-century American history is so polarizing, as vehemently reviled by some as he is revered by others.

Still, there's one point on which we can all agree: Kissinger did not leave an exquisite corpse. The obituaries may describe him as avuncular, professorial, even charismatic. But surely no one, not even career sycophants like Niall Ferguson, will dare eulogize the fallen titan as *sexy.*

How times have changed.

Back when Kissinger was national security advisor, *Women's Wear Daily* published a tittering profile of the young statesman, describing him as "the sex symbol of the Nixon administration."[1] In 1969, according to the profile, Kissinger attended a party full of Washington socialites with an envelope marked "Top Secret" tucked under his arm. The other party guests could hardly contain their curiosity, so Kissinger deflected their questions with a quip: the envelope contained his copy of the latest *Playboy* magazine. (Hugh Hefner apparently found this uproariously funny and thereafter ensured that the national security advisor was provided with a free subscription.)

What the envelope really contained was a draft copy of Nixon's "silent majority" speech, a now-infamous address that aimed to draw a sharp line between the moral decadence of antiwar liberals and Nixon's unflinching realpolitik.

During the 1970s—as he masterminded illegal bombings in Laos and Cambodia and greenlit genocide in East Timor and East Pakistan—

Kissinger was known among Beltway socialites as “the playboy of the western wing.” He liked to be photographed, and photographers obliged. He was a fixture on gossip pages, particularly when his dalliances with famous women spilled into public view—like when he and actress Jill St. John inadvertently set off the alarm at her Hollywood mansion late one night as they stole away to her pool. (“I was teaching her chess,” Kissinger explained later.)[2]

While Kissinger gallivanted with Washington’s jet set, he and the president—a pair so firmly joined at the hip that Isaiah Berlin christened them “Nixonger”—were busy contriving a political brand rooted in their supposed disdain for the liberal elite, whose effete morality, they claimed, could lead only to paralysis. Kissinger certainly disdained the antiwar movement, disparaging demonstrators as “upper-middle-class college kids” and warning, “The very people who shout ‘Power to the People’ are not going to be the people who take over this country if it turns into a test of strength.”[3] He also scorned women: “To me women are no more than a pastime, a hobby. Nobody devotes too much time to a hobby.”[4] But it’s indisputable that Kissinger held a fondness for the gilded liberalism of high society, the exclusive parties and steak dinners and flashbulbs.

And lest we forget, high society loved him back. Gloria Steinem, an occasional dining companion, called Kissinger “the only interesting man in the Nixon administration.” Gossip columnist Joyce Haber described him as “worldly, humorous, sophisticated, and a cavalier with women.”[5] The Hef considered him a friend and once claimed in print that a poll of his models revealed Kissinger to be the man most widely desired for dates at the Playboy mansion.[6]

This infatuation didn’t end with the 1970s. When Kissinger turned ninety in 2013, his red-carpet birthday celebration was attended by a bipartisan crowd that included Michael Bloomberg, Roger Ailes, Barbara Walters, even “veteran for peace” John Kerry, along with some 300 other A-listers. An article in *Women’s Wear Daily*—they continued their Kissinger coverage into the new millennium—reported that Bill Clinton and John McCain delivered the birthday toasts in a ballroom done up in chinoiserie, to please the night’s guest of honor. (McCain, who spent more than five years as a POW, described his “wonderful affection” for Kissinger, “because of the Vietnam War, which was something that was enormously

impactful to both of our lives.") The birthday boy himself then took the stage, where he "reminded guests about the rhythm of history" and seized the occasion to preach the gospel of his favorite cause: bipartisanship.

Kissinger's capacity for bipartisanship was renowned. (Republicans Condoleezza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld were in attendance early in the evening, and later in the night Democrat Hillary Clinton strode in through a freight entrance with open arms, asking, "Ready for round two?") During the party, McCain gushed of Kissinger, "He has been a consultant and advisor to every president, Republican and Democrat, since Nixon." Senator McCain likely spoke for everyone in the ballroom when he continued, "I know of no individual who is more respected in the world than Henry Kissinger."[7]

In fact, much of the world reviled Henry Kissinger. The former secretary of state even avoided visiting several countries out of fear that he would be apprehended and charged with war crimes. In 2002, for example, a Chilean court demanded he answer questions about his role in that country's 1973 coup d'état. In 2001, a French judge sent police officers to Kissinger's Paris hotel room to serve him a formal request for questioning about the same coup, during which several French citizens were disappeared. (Apparently unperturbed, the statesman-turned-private consultant referred the matter to the State Department and boarded a plane to Italy.) Around the same time, he canceled a trip to Brazil after rumors began circling that he would be detained and compelled to answer questions about his role in Operation Condor, the 1970s scheme that united South American dictatorships in disappearing one another's exiled opponents. An Argentine judge investigating the operation had already named Kissinger as one potential "defendant or suspect" in a future criminal indictment.[8]

But in the United States, Kissinger was untouchable. There, one of the twentieth century's most prolific butchers died as he lived—beloved by the rich and powerful, regardless of their partisan affiliation. The reason for Kissinger's bipartisan appeal is straightforward: he was a top strategist of America's empire of capital at a critical moment in that empire's development.

It's small wonder that the political establishment regarded Kissinger as an asset and not an aberration. He embodied what the two ruling parties share in common: a commitment to maintaining capitalism, and the resolve to

ensure favorable conditions for American investors in as much of the world as possible. A stranger to shame and inhibition, Kissinger was able to guide the American empire through a treacherous period in world history, when the United States' rise to global domination indeed sometimes seemed on the brink of collapse.

In an earlier period, the politics of capitalist preservation had been a relatively straightforward affair. Rivalries among the advanced capitalist powers led periodically to spectacular wars, which established hierarchies between capitalist nations but did relatively little to disrupt the forward march of capital throughout the world. (As an added bonus, because these conflagrations were so destructive, they offered regular opportunities for renewed investment—one way to delay the crises of overproduction endemic to capitalist development.)

It's true that, as the capitalist metropoles asserted control over the territories they seized throughout the world, imperialism drew mass opposition from the oppressed. Anti-colonial movements emerged to challenge the terms of global development in every place colonialism was established, but, with some notable exceptions, these movements were unable to repel the aggressive imperial powers. Even when anti-colonial struggles were successful, shaking loose the chains of one imperial power often meant exposing yourself to the invasion of another—in the Americas, for example, the withdrawal of the Spanish from their overseas colonies meant that the United States assumed the role of new regional hegemon at the turn of the twentieth century, asserting its dominance over places that, like Puerto Rico, American leaders considered "foreign in a domestic sense."[9] Throughout this time, colonialism—like capitalism—appeared largely unbreakable.

But after World War II, the axis of global politics shifted.

When the smoke finally dispersed over Europe, it revealed a world that was all but unrecognizable. London lay in ruin. Germany sat in pieces, partitioned by two of its rivals. Japan was effectively annexed by the United States, to be remade in that nation's image. The Soviet Union had generated an industrial economy with unrivaled speed and now held real geopolitical clout. The United States, meanwhile, in just a few generations, had displaced Great Britain as a military and economic power without rival on the world stage.

But most importantly, World War II provided a definitive signal to people throughout the colonized world that colonialism was unsustainable. Europe's dominance was in its death throes. A historical period characterized by wars among First World (or Global North) powers gave way to a period of sustained anti-colonial conflicts in the Third World (or Global South).

The United States, having emerged from World War II as the new world hegemon, would have been on the losing end of any global realignment that restricted the free movement of American investment capital. In this context, the country assumed a new geopolitical role. In the post–World War II period, the era of Kissinger, the United States became the guarantor of the global capitalist system.

But ensuring the health of the system as a whole wasn't always the same as ensuring the dominance of American businesses.[10] Rather, the American state needed to administrate a world order amenable to the development and flourishing of an *international* capitalist class. The United States became the lead architect of postwar Atlantic capitalism—a commercial regime that tied Western European and Japanese economic interests to American corporate strategies.

In other words, to preserve a global capitalist order that foremost defended American *business*—not businesses—the United States needed to foster the successful capitalist development of its rivals. This meant generating new capitalist centers, like Japan, and facilitating the reestablishment of healthy European economies. Yet, as we know, the European metropoles were fast becoming cleaved from their colonies. National liberation movements threatened the core interests the United States had pledged to protect, disrupting the unified world market the country wanted to coordinate. Promoting American interests therefore acquired a broader geopolitical dimension. The power elite in Washington committed itself to defeating challenges to capitalist hegemony wherever in the world they emerged. To that end, the American national security state deployed a variety of means: military support for reactionary regimes; economic sanctions; election meddling; coercion; trade manipulation; tactical arms trading; and, in some cases, direct military intervention.

Throughout his career, what worried Kissinger most was the lurking possibility that subordinate countries might move on their own to create an alternative sphere of influence and trade. The United States did not hesitate

to put an end to such independent initiatives when they emerged. If a country resisted the path laid out for it by the conditions of global capitalist development, the Americans clubbed the challenger into submission. Defiance simply couldn't be tolerated—not with so much wealth and political power at stake. During his lifetime, Kissinger *was* this policy. He understood its objectives and strategic requirements better than anyone among America's ruling class.

The specific policies that Kissinger pursued, therefore, were less about promoting the profits of American corporations and more about securing healthy conditions for capital writ large. This is an important point, frequently neglected in simplistic studies of US empire. Too often, radicals assume a direct link between the interests of specific US corporations abroad and the actions of the American state. And in some cases, this assumption can be supported by history—such as the US military's 1954 removal of Guatemalan social reformer Jacobo Árbenz, undertaken in part because of lobbying from the United Fruit Company.

But in other cases, particularly those we encounter in the thorny tangles of Kissinger's career, this assumption obscures more than it reveals. After the coup against Chile's Salvador Allende, for example, the Nixon administration did not press its allies in the right-wing junta to return previously nationalized mines to the American companies Kennecott and Anaconda. Returning confiscated properties to American corporations was small potatoes. Nixonger's primary goal was accomplished the moment that Allende was removed from power: Chile's democratic road to socialism no longer threatened to generate a systemic alternative to capitalism in the region.

Another oft-neglected fact to keep in mind: contrary to the conventional wisdom, checking Soviet expansionism was hardly an important factor shaping American foreign policy during the Cold War. American plans to underwrite international capitalism by force were decided as early as 1943, when it was not yet clear if the Soviets would even survive the war. And even at the outset of the Cold War, the Soviet Union lacked the will and the capacity to expand beyond its regional satellites. Stalin's moves to stabilize "socialism in one country" emerged as a defensive strategy, and Russia committed to détente as the best bet for its continued existence, demanding only a ring of buffer states to protect it from Western invasions. For this reason, a generation of left militants in Latin America, Asia and Europe

(just ask the Greeks) interpret the so-called “Cold War” as a serial Moscow sellout of liberation movements throughout the world. Kissinger’s public histrionics in support of “Western market civilization” notwithstanding, the threat of Soviet expansion was only really used in American foreign policy as a rhetorical tool.

Understandably, then, the format of the world economy didn’t change all that dramatically after the Soviet Union fell. The neoliberalization of the 1990s represented an intensification of the global program the United States and its allies had pursued all along. And today, the American state continues in its role as the global guarantor of free market capitalism—even when Third World governments, fearful of geopolitical repercussions, perform political contortions to avoid confronting American capital head-on. For example, starting in 2002, Washington began backing efforts to topple Venezuela’s left-populist president, Hugo Chávez, even as American oil giants kept drilling in Maracaibo and Venezuelan crude continued flowing into Houston and New Jersey.

The Kissinger doctrine persists today: if sovereign countries refuse to be worked into broader US schemes, the American national security state will move swiftly to undercut their sovereignty. This is business as usual for the American empire, no matter which party’s avatar sits in the White House—and Kissinger, while he lived, was among the chief stewards of this status quo.

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Henry Kissinger is finally dead. To say he was a bad man verges on cliché, but it is nonetheless a fact. And now, at long last, he’s gone.

Still, our collective relief shouldn’t divert us from a deeper appraisal. In the end, Kissinger must be rejected for more than just his uniquely forthcoming embrace of atrocity in the name of American power. As progressives and socialists, we must move beyond seeing Kissinger as a sordid prince of the imperialist shadows, a figure that can only be confronted litigiously, in the cold glare of an imaginary courtroom. His revolting coldness, and his casual dismissal of its often-genocidal results, should not prevent us from seeing him as he was—an embodiment of official US policies.

Kissinger’s death has rid the world of a homicidal manager of American power. With this book, we intend to dance on his grave. But we also aim to go further than that. By showing Kissinger’s behavior to be part and parcel of American expansionism more generally, we hope to muster a political and moral critique of American foreign policy—a foreign policy that systematically subverts popular ambitions and undermines sovereignty in defense of elites, both foreign and domestic.

This is an unusual collection of essays. The chapters that follow don’t offer a chronological account of Kissinger’s career, nor do they pretend to provide a fresh and conclusive take on postwar international politics. Rather, each section focuses on a particular part of the world where Kissinger wrought havoc, dividing into digestible episodes the longer story of American ascension in the second half of the twentieth century. This book can be read straight through, but it is also useful as a reference, as a catalog of Kissinger’s dark accomplishments over the course of a long career in public carnage. The dead statesman’s name often appears in writing accompanied by a list of countries—and, depending on the political proclivities of the writer, an assertion that Kissinger has either helped them or harmed them. Here, in these pages, you’ll find the details. We think you’ll be outraged.

There are two essays included here that don’t fit the regional theme, though. After this introduction, Greg Grandin provides an anti-obituary, “To Die at the Right Time,” sifting through Kissinger’s convoluted worldview to uncover its inner machinery. Christy Thornton likewise closes the volume with a hard look at Kissinger’s second career as a private mercenary, selling his world-breaking services from the offices of a cushy Wall Street consultancy.

At one point in this book, historian Gerald Horne tells a story about the time Kissinger nearly drowned while canoeing beneath the world’s largest waterfall. It’s an amusing tale, made all the more invigorating by our knowledge that time has finally accomplished what Victoria Falls failed to do so many decades ago. But lest we celebrate too soon, we must remember that the American national security state that produced him remains alive and well.

Introduction:

To Die at the Right Time

Greg Grandin

> *Many die too late and some die too early. Still the doctrine sounds strange: Die at the right time. Die at the right time.*
>
> Friedrich Nietzsche

In 2015, I published a book, *Kissinger's Shadow*, which argued that Henry Kissinger is good to think with. By this, I meant that his long career (as an early Cold War defense intellectual, top foreign policymaker, consigliere to the world's elite and hawkish pundit) and very self-aware philosophy of history help illuminate the contours of postwar militarism, tracing a bright line from the disastrous war in Southeast Asia to the catastrophic one in the Gulf.

The book came out a year before the unanticipated election of Donald Trump to the White House, when I thought an autumnal Kissinger's last act would be to bask in the warmth of neoliberal accolades offered by Democrats such as Hillary Clinton and Samantha Power. Its conclusion focused on the ways in which Barack Obama's pragmatic, managerial militarism echoed Kissinger's earlier justifications for interventionism and war, and the way Kissinger used Obama's disregard of national sovereignty, in his reliance on drones and bombing campaigns, as an ex post facto absolution of his own past actions. Asked about his involvement in the overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile and his illegal bombing of

Cambodia, Kissinger answered that Obama had behaved similarly, pointing to drone assassinations and the ouster of Gaddafi in Libya.

It seemed a perfect expression of American militarism's merry-go-round logic: Kissinger invokes today's endless, open-ended war to justify what he did in Cambodia, Chile and elsewhere nearly half a century ago, even as what he did half a century ago helped create the conditions for today's endless wars.

It turns out *Kissinger's Shadow* needed an epilogue, for the 2016 election of Donald Trump to the presidency vindicated its argument in a different way.

Kissinger idealized people very much like Trump nearly his whole life: great statesmen whose greatness resides in their spontaneity and their agility, who thrive on chaos, on, as Kissinger wrote in the 1950s, "perpetual creation, on a constant redefinition of goals."[1] They need to avoid the paralysis generated by thinking too much about what might go wrong, about the "pre-vision of catastrophes" that often beset diplomats and regional specialists. "There are two kinds of realists," Kissinger wrote in the early 1960s, "those who manipulate facts and those who create them. The West requires nothing so much as men able to create their own reality."[2] And who better to create their own reality than the star of reality TV?

Freedom over Ethics

In his postwar cohort of defense intellectuals, Kissinger was among the most self-conscious about the philosophical tradition undergirding his policies and counsels—a kind of German idealism drawn from the early twentieth-century philosopher–historian Oswald Spengler, who defined history according to its subjective, prerational, and instinctual elements. That tradition stood in stark contrast to the empiricism, pragmatism, and positivism that dominated American Cold War social science, which held that reality is transparent, that the "truth" of facts can be arrived at by simply observing those facts.

At Harvard in the late 1940s and 1950s, when he did his undergraduate and graduate work before taking a position as assistant professor, Kissinger strongly criticized both moral absolutism and the idea of objectivity,

contesting the assertion that the laws governing society are knowable through observation.

Recently, Kissinger's authorized biographer, Niall Ferguson, argued that Kissinger is a Kantian, which is both half right and fully wrong. Kissinger did embrace the part of Kantian thought that emphasized radical freedom, but he did so not to affirm—as Ferguson believes—but to undermine foundational ethics. "We can hardly insist," he said in a Harvard seminar discussion, "on both our freedom and on the necessity of our values." We can't, in other words, be both radically free and subject to a fixed moral requirement. Quoting Kant's famous categorical imperative to treat people always as ends and never as means, Kissinger added an addendum: "what one considers an end, and what one considers a mean, depends essentially on the metaphysics of one's system, and on the concept one has of one's self and one's relationship to the universe."[3]

In other words, Kissinger early on declared himself in favor of what the modern New Right has denounced, until recently at least, as radical relativism: there is no such thing as absolute truth, he argued in his early writings, no truth at all other than what could be deduced from one's own solitary perspective. "Meaning represents the emanation of a metaphysical context," he wrote. "Every man in a certain sense creates his picture of the world." Truth, Kissinger said, isn't found in facts but in the questions we ask of those facts. History's meaning is "inherent in the nature of our query."[4]

That line is from a thesis Kissinger submitted as a Harvard senior, a nearly 400-page journey through the writings of a number of European philosophers. *The Meaning of History*, as Kissinger titled his thesis, is dense, melancholic, and often overwrought, easy to dismiss as the product of youth. But Kissinger continued to repeat many of its premises and arguments, in different forms, throughout his life. Besides, by the time of his arrival at Harvard, Kissinger had extensive real-world experience thinking about the questions his thesis raised, including the relationship between data and wisdom, the material world and consciousness, and being and nothingness, confirming an often-overlooked fact about our post-fact present: the experiential origins of the intellectual relativism that swept through the twentieth century are mass murder, militarism, imperialism and endless war.

Kissinger had escaped the Holocaust, but at least twelve of his family members hadn't. Drafted into the US Army in 1943, he spent the last year of the war back in Germany, working his way up the ranks of the intelligence service. As military administrator of the occupied Rhine River town of Krefeld, with a population of 200,000, he purged Nazis from municipal posts. He also distinguished himself as an intelligence agent. Identifying, arresting and interrogating Gestapo officers and securing confidential informants, Kissinger won a Bronze Star for his effectiveness and bravery.

In other words, the relationship between fact and truth, a central preoccupation of his thesis, was not an abstract question for Kissinger. It was the stuff of life and death, and Kissinger's subsequent diplomacy was, writes one of Kissinger's Harvard classmates, a "virtual transplant from the world of thought into the world of power."[5]

Kissinger was greatly influenced by Spengler's civilizational critique, the idea that complex societies are born, mature and then fade. He was especially impressed with Spengler's notion that the moment of decline could be identified by the moment when technique supersedes purpose, when the accountants, economists and bureaucrats take over from the priests, poets and warriors.

It is the moment when the "causality men" (Spengler's term) and the "fact men" (Kissinger's term) take over that a civilization is in most danger. As the dreams, myths and risk-taking of an earlier creative period fall away, intellectuals and political leaders become predominantly concerned with questioning not *why*, but *how*. "A century of purely extensive effectiveness," Spengler writes, referring to the bureaucratic rationalism of modern society, which strives for ever more efficient ways of doing things, "is a time of decline." The intuitive dimensions of wisdom get tossed aside, technocratic procedure overwhelms purpose, and information is mistaken for wisdom.

Western culture was history's highest expression of technical reason: it "views the whole world," Kissinger wrote in 1950, "as a working hypothesis." The "machine" was its great symbol, a "perpetuum mobile"—a perpetual motion machine that asserts relentless "mastery over nature" (you can hear strong echoes of Adorno and Horkheimer's "critique of instrumental reason" in Kissinger's thesis). And the vastly powerful and

obsessively efficient United States was the West's vanguard. As such, it was especially vulnerable to becoming trapped in the "cult of the useful."[6]

Harvard was the Vatican of American positivism, filled with the country's high priests of social science (including a young pioneer in game theory, Daniel Ellsberg). Kissinger looked around and asked: would American leaders command or fall slave to their own technique? "Technical knowledge will be of no avail," the twenty-six-year-old student-veteran warned, "to a soul that has lost its meaning."[7]

Kissinger wrote those lines before the US fully committed to Vietnam, but over the years he would return repeatedly to many of his thesis premises to explain why that war, along with others that followed, went wrong. "When technique becomes exalted over purpose, men become the victims of their complexities," he wrote in 1965.[8] His book *World Order*, which he published at age ninety-one, cites T.S. Eliot's "Choruses from The Rock": "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? / Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

Kissinger accepted Spengler's critique of past civilizations. But he rejected its dreary determinism, instead leavening its pessimism with a variant of existentialism, the idea that history had no intrinsic meaning, and therefore couldn't be "determined" by anything. Humans possess free will, he wrote, and their actions enjoy a significant range of freedom. Decay was not inevitable. "Spengler," Kissinger wrote in 1950, "merely described a fact of decline, and not its necessity." "There is a margin," he would write after he left public office in the late 1970s—that is, *after* Vietnam, *after* his policies helped unleash the genocides in Bangladesh and East Timor, *after* his brutal support for homicidal insurgencies in southern Africa and *after* his illegal bombing of Cambodia set the conditions that gave rise to the Khmer Rouge—"between necessity and accident, in which the statesman by perseverance and intuition must choose and thereby shape the destiny of his people." Limits did exist, Kissinger wrote, but political leaders who hide "behind historical inevitability" to justify their inaction are guilty of "moral abdication."[9]

Hence Kissinger was always on the hunt for the Great Statesman who rises above facts and bureaucracies, who can tap into the "soul-sense" of a culture and translate intuition into bold policy. "Often enough a statesman does not 'know' what he is doing," Spengler wrote, "but that does not

prevent him from following with confidence just the one path that leads to success."[10] Kissinger thought Nixon was one such man, but, alas, he overplayed his hand. There was Reagan, whom Kissinger at first resisted (largely because Reagan and the first generation of neocons rose to prominence attacking Kissinger) but eventually came around to admiring. Reagan had "his own exuberant way of communicating with the American public," Kissinger said, defending Reagan calling Muammar Gaddafi a "mad dog" and supporting the bombing of Libya.[11]

And then there was Trump, a true son of Spengler, someone with his finger on the pulse of his culture. Sensing decline, Trump wouldn't be afraid to act to bend the curve upward. Unlike past presidents, he instinctively sensed the trap that was being laid for him by the bureaucracy, intelligence agencies, and foreign service, and he refused to enter. Trump, according to Kissinger, "has no obligation to any particular group because he has become a president on the basis of his own strategy."[12] He is a free man.

That Trump followed Obama is significant, for in Kissinger's civilizational typology, the professorial Obama is a platonic ideal of the leader who appears just at the precipice. He's a "fact man," paralyzed by a vision of history that sees the past as nothing more than a series of cause-and-effect relations, and the present as nothing more than the product of endless blowback. Obama, according to Kissinger, was less concerned with advancing American purpose than he was with "short-term consequences turning into permanent obstacles."[13] And so he did nothing, believing that he vindicated American values by withdrawing rather than acting.

We are living in time of extreme global crisis, Kissinger said, and Obama couldn't represent the West because he had no sense, no feeling, for the West. He, complained Kissinger, "basically withdrew America from international politics."[14]

The Willingness to Act

Kissinger, drawing on the philosophy of history described above, had over the course of his career insisted on the importance of creative and unexpected responses to crises—exactly the "unpredictability" that Trump both values and performs.

“Unpredictability” is needed for a number of reasons. The greatest of great diplomats are the men who shake up their foreign-policy bureaucracies, which over time inevitably become ossified, beholden to past principles (like Washington’s One China position) and too dependent on “experts,” who, deeply versed in the details of their particular region, inevitably recommend caution rather than action. “Those statesmen who have achieved final greatness did not do so though resignation, however well founded,” Kissinger once wrote. “It was given to them not only to maintain the perfection of order but to have the strength to contemplate chaos, there to find material for fresh creation.”[15]

Unpredictability is also needed to introduce the threat of irrationality into negotiations. Kissinger has long insisted that war and diplomacy are inseparable and that, to be effective, diplomats need to be able to wield threats—the more irrational, or unpredictable, the better to make the threat credible—and offer incentives in equal, unrestricted, measure. This was the logic that led Kissinger, as a rising defense intellectual trying to make a name for himself in the 1950s and ’60s, to advocate the use of both “limited nuclear war” and low-intensity wars in areas of marginal significance, such as Southeast Asia. The goal was, as he wrote in 1957, to convey the “maximum credible threat.”[16] To do so, nothing should be off the table. (Trump made this exact argument during his campaign.)

“How can you conduct negotiations without a credible threat of escalation?” Kissinger asked defense analyst Daniel Ellsberg on Christmas Day 1968, a month before Nixon’s inauguration. Kissinger had asked Ellsberg to put together a position paper outlining possible alternatives for Vietnam, which Ellsberg did. But he didn’t include a “threat option” in the paper. “People negotiate all the time without threatening bombing,” Ellsberg said dryly.[17]

Until recently, one could argue that it was Richard Nixon who best realized Kissinger’s philosophy of history and diplomacy. Upon winning the presidency in 1968 with a promise to end the war in Vietnam, Nixon wanted a tough line against North Vietnam (just as Trump wanted a tough line against China, and ISIS, and Mexico, and Cuba, and Iran …), believing it would force Hanoi to make the concessions necessary to bring the conflict to a face-saving conclusion.

Even before the November 1968 election, Nixon had shared with his advisor, Bob Haldeman, this plan, which became known as the madman theory. Walking along a Key Biscayne beach, Nixon told his future chief of staff that he wanted the North Vietnamese "to believe I've reached the point where I might do anything to stop the war. We'll just slip the word to them that, 'for God's sake, you know Nixon is obsessed about Communists. We can't restrain him when he's angry—and he has his hand on the nuclear button'—and Ho Chi Minh himself will be in Paris in two days begging for peace."[18]

Kissinger obliged. "Toughness" was a leitmotif that ran through much of his statecraft, and the madman theory was a logical extension of Kissinger's philosophy—the idea that power isn't power unless one is willing to use it. Kissinger and Nixon's mad bombing of Southeast Asia was driven by motives that were the opposite of Machiavellian realism: it was executed to try to bring about a world Nixon and Kissinger believed they *ought* to live in—one in which they could, by the force of their material power, bend peasant-poor countries like Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to their will—rather than reflect the real world they *did* inhabit: one in which, try as they might, they had been unable to terrorize these weaker nations into submission.

Vietnam revealed the moral emptiness at the center of Kissinger's philosophy of history, which, judging from his keen embrace of Trump, has never been filled. Over the years, Kissinger repeatedly urged America's leaders to state their vision and make clear what they meant to accomplish with any given policy or action—to not, as he put it, exalt technique over purpose. Such advice makes liberals swoon, since it seems so, well, serious. But Kissinger could never define what he meant by purpose.

At times, he appeared to mean the ability to play a long geostrategic game, to imagine where one wants to be, in relation to one's adversaries, in ten years' time and to put in place a policy to get there. At other times, purpose might have referred to the need to create "legitimacy," demonstrate "credibility," or establish a global "balance of power." But these are all instrumental definitions of purpose. They all still beg the question: *why?* If the projection of power is the means, what is the end? It was not to accumulate more objective power, for Kissinger had consistently argued that there was no such thing. Kissinger was perhaps most well known for the concept "balance of power." But there's a fascinating and rarely cited

passage in his 1954 doctoral dissertation in which he insists that what he means by this is not "real" power: "a balance of power *legitimized* by power would be highly unstable and make unlimited war almost inevitable, for the equilibrium is achieved not by the *fact* but by the *consciousness* of balance" (Kissinger's emphasis). As he went on to write, "This consciousness is never brought about until it is tested."[19]

In order to test power—that is, in order to create an awareness of power—one needs to be willing to act. And the best way to produce that willingness is to act. On this point, at least, Kissinger was unfailingly clear: "inaction has to be avoided" in order to show that action is possible. Only "action," he wrote, could void the systemic "incentive for inaction."[20] Only action could overcome the paralyzing fear of the "drastic consequences" that might result from such action (such as nuclear war). Only through action—including wars, he justified, in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq—can America become vital again, can it produce the consciousness by which it understands its power, breaks the impasse caused by an overreliance on nuclear technology, instills cohesion among allies and reminds an increasingly petrified foreign policy bureaucracy of the purpose of American power.

In the 1950s, drawing on Spengler's civilizational diagnostic, Kissinger critiqued the idea of projecting power for power's sake, believing that is what happens when the technicians and bureaucrats take over, those who know how but forget why. But at the end of the day, that is always where Kissinger winds up, embracing the object of his own criticism.

Kissingerism is a perpetual motion machine: the purpose of American power is to create an awareness of American purpose. Put in Spenglerian terms, power is history's starting and ending point, history's "manifestation" and its "exclusive objective." And since Kissinger held to an extremely plastic notion of reality, other intangible concepts such as "interests," "values," "tradition" and "imagination" were also pulled into the whirlpool of his reasoning: we can't defend our interests until we know what our interests are, and we can't know what our interests are until we defend them. We can't be motivated to act on our values unless we know what our values are, but we can't know what our values are until we act.

The perpetual motion machine has been made flesh in Donald Trump, who, like Kissinger's philosophy of the deed, is hollow at his core, who

performs power for power's sake, dominance for dominance's sake, whose projections of unpredictability collapse tactic and purpose, means and ends—who creates his own meaning, his "picture of the world" with every tweet.

"You *are* the Right"

Kissinger began his young adult life fleeing German fascism and started his career as a defense intellectual warning about fascism. In 1964, he attended, as an advisor to the moderate Nelson Rockefeller, the Republican National Convention, held in San Francisco's Cow Palace, and was appalled by the "the frenzy, the fervor and the intensity" of the young white men who supported Barry Goldwater.

In describing the Goldwater movement, Kissinger used terms that could easily be applied today to Trumpism. He condemned mainstream Republicans for accommodating, rather than confronting, Goldwaterites, acting much as German democrats did "in the face of Hitler." "A revolution was clearly in the making," Kissinger cautioned, equating the racist, anti-Semitic, conspiratorial, anti-NATO Goldwater delegates who had taken over the convention with the European Fascism he witnessed in Germany in the 1930s.

In San Francisco, however, Kissinger was not looking backward to his Nazi-tormented youth, but forward to his future. Over the subsequent years, with each lurch of American politics to the right, Kissinger lurched with it. At every single one of America's postwar turning points, moments of crisis when other defense intellectuals of his stature, be they political liberals or conservatives, expressed doubts about American power—Hans Morgenthau, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., George Kennan, Thomas Schelling, Reinhold Niebuhr—Kissinger broke in the opposite direction.

Having started as an advisor to the centrist Nelson Rockefeller, he made his peace with Nixon, whom he at first thought unhinged. As Nixon's national security advisor, he used a bellicose foreign policy, including the bombing of Southeast Asia and support for white supremacy in southern Africa, to placate the New Right. "We wouldn't have had Laos," he told Ronald Reagan, "we wouldn't have had Cambodia," had Hubert Humphrey been elected president in 1968.[21]

When Watergate began Nixon's downfall, Kissinger repeatedly told liberals that he remained in the administration to prevent the country from moving further to the fringe, to prevent "some real tough guys," the "most brutal forces in the society," from taking over. "We are saving you from the Right," he told National Security Council (NSC) staffers who had resigned in protest over his 1970 invasion of Cambodia. "You *are* the Right," they answered.[22]

In the early 1970s, he thought it "inconceivable" that Reagan might become president.[23] But in 1981 he lobbied the Reagan administration for a job, and then criticized Reagan from the right throughout the 1980s, especially urging the further militarization of his Middle East and Central American policies. The neoconservatives who coalesced around George W. Bush after September 11 rose to power attacking Kissinger, derailing or rolling back many of his diplomatic achievements; but Kissinger supported their wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and exhorted them to go forward, to attack Yemen and Somalia.

Intellectually, as well, Kissinger moved quickly from a worried observer of the Goldwater insurgency to a sympathetic chronicler of revolutionary conservatives, offering what might be an apt historical precedent for Donald Trump: Otto von Bismarck, the nineteenth-century Prussian chancellor who united Germany in 1871. Kissinger had meant to include a section on Bismarck in his 1954 doctoral dissertation, which, by focusing on Klemens von Metternich and Viscount Castlereagh, the foreign ministers of Austria and Great Britain who imposed a conservative peace on Europe after winning the Napoleonic Wars, established Kissinger's reputation as a realist. But Kissinger cut the material to save space.

He returned to the topic, though, publishing an essay on Bismarck in the summer of 1968, at a moment when political conservatives like Kissinger were searching for effective ways to counter an ascending new left movement and a world in revolt. Kissinger found hope in Bismarck, whose "genius" was his ability to "restrain contending forces, both domestic and foreign, by manipulating their antagonisms." Biographers have said that the main thing Kissinger took from Bismarck was realpolitik, an "ability to exploit every available option without the constraint of ideology."[24]

Yet Kissinger's essay "The White Revolutionary" makes clear that what he admired most in the Iron Chancellor was his revolutionary instinct, his

“will to impose” a vision that was “incompatible with the existing order.” “His was a strange revolution,” Kissinger wrote. “It appeared in the guise of conservatism” and “triumphed domestically through the vastness of its successes abroad.” In so doing, Bismarck proved that liberals were not the only agents of world history, seizing the initiative from revolutionaries, equaling their élan, and adopting the dialectical imagination for himself. “Not every revolution begins with a march on the Bastille.”[25]

Kissinger offered that observation about Bismarck, but he could have been talking about the “intense, efficient, curiously insecure” young conservatives who attended the 1964 Republican Convention, who were indeed learning to adopt the style, tactics and rhetoric of the Left—launching a long march through the institutions that resulted in control of the legislature, the courts, most state governments and, with Trump’s election, the White House and the nuclear codes. And based on his remarks, Kissinger apparently believed he had found in Trump his “white revolutionary”: a political conservative in possession of insurgent qualities, able to, as Kissinger put it elsewhere, dissolve “technical limitations,” break free of traditions, and shatter conventions, protocols, and bureaucracies.

From Rockefeller to Nixon, then on to Reagan, George W. Bush and Donald Trump, Kissinger’s service tracks the metaphysical evolution of American power, from a time when spectacle mediated the relationship between interest and ideology to now, when foreign policy is completely subordinated to spectacle. We all live now in the Kissingerian void. What horrors await?

Who knows, but whoever delivers Kissinger’s eulogy—and it would be fitting if it were Trump himself—should consider using these words from Kissinger’s 1950 thesis:

> We cannot require immortality as the price for giving meaning to life. The experience of freedom enables us to rise beyond the suffering of the past and the frustrations of history. In this spirituality resides humanity’s essence, the unique which each man imparts to the necessity of his life, the self-transcendence which gives peace.[26]

Trump was the transcendence that gave Kissinger peace.

Americas

1

Kissinger and the South American Revolutions

Aldo Marchesi

Although the arrival of Henry Kissinger signaled a rupture in American foreign policy along with domestic political shifts, the change was not as keenly perceived in Latin America. Nevertheless, Kissinger would ultimately close a political cycle that began in the early 1960s in South America.

Salvador Allende was the antithetical embodiment of Henry Kissinger's Latin America policy. Three years before Kissinger assumed a leading role in foreign policy, Allende had warned of the problems a left government in the region might face. In 1966, the future president of Chile gave an almost prophetic warning, laying out how the Latin American left viewed US foreign policy:

> The Johnson Doctrine constitutes for the Chilean people, as for all the countries of Latin America, an explicit declaration that imperialists will respond with violence to any popular movement that has any chance of coming into power. This has made the Chilean popular movement—which has achieved notable gains expanding and deepening democracy in our country—clearly realize that the United States will use force to prevent it from accessing power by democratic and legal means.
>
> It also means that, consequently, we have an obligation to intensify our struggle; mobilize the masses, link anti-imperialist actions to the everyday demands of the population: strikes, land occupations, collective mobilizations, and the awareness that we will meet with opposition from reactionary violence and we will oppose it with revolutionary violence. It

> will be the people of Chile and our country's conditions that will determine what method we use to defeat the imperialist enemy and its allies.[1]

Based on these arguments, Allende called for the creation of an "initiative aimed at permanently connecting and coordinating the anti-imperialist actions of the Latin American people." Allende, the most clear-sighted representative of the legal road to socialism, outlined the dilemmas facing the whole of the region's left forces. They were confronting a power that evinced an increasingly explicit will to oppose any center-left or left movement vying for power, be it through institutional or revolutionary means. What Allende called the Johnson Doctrine was the justification formulated by the United States to intervene against democratic forces in the Dominican Republic's conflict in 1965, which appealed to the alleged threat of communist dictatorship.

In 1964 the United States backed the Brazilian coup d' état, which laid the groundwork for a cycle of military dictatorships that, under the ideological mantle of national security, devastated South America and implemented brutal forms of dealing with political opponents. The repression unleashed against dissidents intensified and culminated in 1968 when systematic torture methods taught by American advisors were denounced. Accordingly, the Brazilian dictatorship installed a type of political regime involving an explicit alliance between national elites and the US government.

The Johnson Doctrine arrived after the last possible convergence between Latin American developmentalists and US reformist sectors that promoted urban, social and agrarian reform initiatives during the first years of the Alliance for Progress. The end of the Alliance for Progress meant that the initiative of the much-needed "revolution in freedom" promised by Kennedy no longer enjoyed the support of the United States, and that the empire was tilting toward authoritarian military governments that promoted conservative modernization models.

In 1968, a mere two years after Allende's denunciation of the Johnson Doctrine and his call for anti-imperialist coordination, a US State Department document concluded that revolution in Latin America did not pose a serious threat in the short run, since in the countries where there had been insurgency movements (Colombia, Guatemala and Venezuela), the national governments had succeeded in containing them with the help of the

United States.[2] This, however, did not mean that there were no chances for a revolution in the continent in the long term: “Certainly within the next decade—we see conditions developing throughout the area which will be much more conducive to revolution.”[3] The document’s forecast for the next decade included developments that did materialize in the Southern Cone in the following years. It concluded that the “Castro-style insurgency” would no longer be the predominant form of insurgency and that primarily urban movements would emerge given the continent’s demographic changes. The report suggested that while such movements would vary in terms of sectors involved (militaries, members of the clergy, university students, workers), their ideologies (Marxist and nationalist) and their political strategies, they would all have a common feature: “a nationalistic, independent attitude with strong overtones of anti-US sentiment.”[4] The failures of the Alliance for Progress and the emergence of more powerful and diverse popular challenges to US control of the region set the stage for a hardening of the Johnson Doctrine and decisive clashes that would reverberate far beyond the hemisphere. The Kissinger years corresponded to a period that saw the expansion in South America of a diversity of revolutionary ideas embraced by an assortment of political actors (military, guerrillas, center-left politicians, unionists) and arising from different ideological traditions (Marxism, populism, Christianity). A 1969 summit of Latin American foreign ministers issued the “Viña del Mar Consensus,” which implicated world powers in perpetuating the region’s under-development. More radical still, the 1973 assumption of Héctor José Cámpora as president of Argentina raised the prospects of a Lima–Santiago–Buenos Aires–Havana axis as an alternative to American hegemony. This axis portended a moment of major transformation in the region.

As the military regimes in Bolivia and Peru strayed from American influence, they began proposing a program of social transformation linked to the nationalization of natural resources and agrarian transformation. In Chile, the left coalition that pursued socialism by peaceful and legal means inspired coalitions in nearby countries, such as Uruguay’s Broad Front (Frente Amplio). Peronism’s nationalist tradition seemed to be adapting to the new historical circumstances amid a series of powerful urban insurrections in Argentina like the Cordobazo. It proposed new forms of social and political mobilization in opposition to the dictatorship, which led

to the radicalization of the Peronist movement that returned to power in 1973.

Initially Latin America was not a priority for the Nixon administration. The Rockefeller report, however, pointed to growing malaise against the policies of the United States and offered the promotion of American investment as one possible solution.[5] The first proposed policy consisted of improving bilateral relations on a case-by-case basis. According to Tanya Harmer, in 1969 Kissinger told the Chilean chancellor of Eduardo Frei's Christian Democratic government that "history has never been produced in the south."[6] But a year later, a series of events would force him to reconsider. "The consolidation of Allende in power in Chile, therefore, would pose some very serious threat to our interests and position in the hemisphere, and would affect developments and our relations to them elsewhere in the world," warned Kissinger, who then anticipated a domino effect that could swing through the inter-American system and even reach Western Europe. Brazil, firmly under military rule, was the main American ally in what many analysts at the time called a "counterrevolutionary strategy," aiming to halt the region's transformation. The Kissinger years saw the emergence of military dictatorships, which, supported by civil society's conservative sectors and legitimated by ruling class discourses, defended a modernizing economic project with a conservative slant. These regimes elaborated systematic practices of state terrorism and persecution of political opponents in the national, regional and even global arenas.

For example, Operation Condor, established by the region's military forces and jointly conducted with the United States, murdered dissidents and illegally transferred prisoners across countries. Its broad aim was to annihilate the various political movements for change. Some emblematic victims of this operation shed light on the heterogeneity of the dictatorships' enemies. They included Chilean Edgardo Enríquez, leader of the MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement), a radical organization advocating armed insurrection; Carlos Prats, a constitutionalist liberal Chilean general; former Bolivian president General Juan José Torres, a nationalist; the former Uruguayan center-left senator, Zelmar Michelini; the speaker of the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies, Héctor Gutiérrez Ruiz; and Allende's foreign minister, Orlando Letelier, killed in a car bombing in the United States. These targeted individuals illustrate the fierce opposition to the range of reform projects in the region.

The factors that enabled the rise of such operations were latent before Kissinger's arrival in government. Local conservative sectors' growing preferences for authoritarian solutions, the militaries' training in a national security doctrine that brought together French and American counterinsurgency methods, including attendance in the School of the Americas, along with Central Intelligence Agency and the State Department backing, were all already in place by 1969. But what declassified documents reveal is an unprecedented, direct and explicit involvement by Kissinger in these processes, even in their more repressive dimensions.

Toward the mid-1970s, an unprecedented ideological fanaticism led the dictatorships to view South America as the forefront of a third world war in the fight against communism, while the United States was perceived to be the rear guard. That this crusading spirit, which justified all kinds of atrocities against political opponents, began to bear domestic political costs for US Republicans and worried certain officials of the Department of State. In July 1976, Harry Shlaudeman, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, warned in an extensive report of the dangers of this ideological radicalization, "This siege mentality shading into paranoia," in which "some talk of the 'Third World War,' with the countries of the southern cone as the last bastion of Christian civilization … The broader implications for us and for future trends in the hemisphere are disturbing." The report ended on a sarcastic note: "How to end the Third World War," and offered a series of proposals to "bring them [the dictatorships] back to our cognitive universe."[7]

Kissinger, while aware of the threat, continued to empathize with the crusading spirit of the Southern Cone's militaries. At the June 1976 Organization of American States (OAS) conference, when criticism of the Chilean dictatorship surfaced from the American political scene and from some of the region's countries, Kissinger had a private meeting with Augusto Pinochet in which he conveyed his firmest support: "We want to help, not undermine you. You did a great service to the West in overthrowing Allende." These gestures expose Kissinger's intimacy with the regimes' terror. He did not seem worried about reining in the militaries' fanatical crusade; rather, he endorsed the violent practices perpetrated by the dictatorial states. His support may explain why these repressive dictatorships were so ruthlessly "effective."

By 1976, the concerns described in the 1968 State Department document appear to have been resolved. The pattern of revolutionary projects from the 1960s had faded—the movements were defeated, their leaders killed, missing, exiled or imprisoned. Kissinger was also battered by the experience. His leadership had been undermined as a result of his involvement in the region.

But unlike in Indochina, in this part of the world Kissinger had accomplished his objective. The revolutionaries and their ideas, which had so challenged American hegemony, had disappeared from public arenas, and many who had survived these battles later became victims of state terror. Now that the revolutions had been defeated, the empire could show its more benign face and offer assistance through the human rights policies promoted by President Jimmy Carter’s renovated administration.

2

Kissinger in Chile

René Rojas

In late winter of 1971, six months after the election of Salvador Allende and the Popular Unity (UP) coalition led by the Communist and Socialist parties, Nixon extolled America's defense of democracy and self-determination. He gravely proclaimed to Chile's ambassador that "the path represented by the program of your government is not the path chosen by the people of this country, but we recognize the right of any country to order its affairs." Not to be outdone, Kissinger explained that the US government "did not wish in any way to interfere with the internal affairs of Chile," adding that the country's unprecedented reform process was "worthy of great admiration."

Even by the standards of American policymakers' duplicity, Kissinger's cynicism stands out. As is well known, and was understood at the time, immediately after Allende won the presidency and inaugurated the Chilean road to socialism, US elites began a campaign to make the underdeveloped country's economy "scream." Kissinger-the-realist simply refused to idly "watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people." But even the northern giant could not remake Chilean history just as it pleased.

US meddling in Chilean politics was not new. In 1948, Washington's influence had contributed to the liberal president Gabriel González Videla's decision to turn on his Popular Front allies and persecute Communists. On

that occasion, prominent militant Pablo Neruda, the Nobel Prize–winning poet, was lucky enough to save himself after a dangerous escape across the Andes.

A quarter century later, the United States again flexed its muscle to rein in the region. Kissinger led the campaign to crush Allende's democratic strategy for radical reform. Efforts to defeat the UP culminated in the September 11, 1973, coup, which ushered in human and social catastrophes that few, even among the coup plotters, could have imagined. Allende and Neruda would not survive. Nor would the thousands of workers and activists who were assassinated or disappeared by Augusto Pinochet's regime of terror.

Kissinger's obsession with toppling Allende was not driven by an unreflective defense of US corporate interests. After all, Washington had learned to accept nationalizations throughout the region, and after the coup that toppled the UP government, the largest expropriated mining interests remained under Chilean state control. Nor did his preoccupation stem from fears over Soviet or Cuban expansionism. Following the Cuban missile crisis, the Soviets ceded Latin America as an unchallenged sphere of US influence; indeed, throughout the Allende years, as Kissinger and the US foreign policy establishment knew, Moscow was not going to let Chile's road to socialism spoil its détente with the United States.

Kissinger mapped out a strategy to bring down the UP because Allende's policies and the movements behind them posed a threat to US domination of Latin America. As the region was in upheaval, with all stripes of nationalists, populists and radicals challenging the US-led order, American elites did not hesitate to brandish the full array of aggression — whether open or covert, partisan or economic, civilian or military—to topple democratically elected leaders, support dictators and facilitate mass state terrorism. And while it is most likely that the coup and the slaughter it ushered in would have occurred without US intervention, Kissinger's actions to destroy Chile's democratic revolution are revealing.

The Bloody Tracks of Chilean Socialism

By the time Chile's workers and peasants rose to stare down local elites and the hegemon to the north, Latin America, in the eyes of US global planners, had become a decisive arena in the "mortal struggle to determine the shape

of the future world." Globally, American postwar foreign policy consisted of an expansionist push sold as Soviet containment. In the western hemisphere there was something genuine about containment, but it had little to do with Soviet meddling. Instead, new homegrown challenges to US dominance had to be suppressed.

Following the Cuban Revolution, and particularly after the failure of the Alliance for Progress, sovereign development models featuring profound reforms began challenging the US-led regional capitalist order. Allende and the UP represented the most radical of the proliferating threats. Washington intervened to preserve a commercial system that organized markets, capital flows, resources and political forces into an arrangement that sustained US supremacy. But growing industry gave workers' movements expanding organizational capacities, which took on unpredictable militancy and autonomy.

Allende had come dangerously close to winning the presidency in 1958, a mere decade after the Videla administration betrayed radicals and labor. With elites divided between two candidates, his new communist-socialist front lost the plurality by less than three percentage points. Six years later, as the workers, student, shanty and peasant movements surged, business parties came together to back the third-way capitalist program of the Christian Democrats; with reluctant support of the traditional landed and conservative elites, Eduardo Frei Montalva's modernizing "revolution in liberation" campaign handily won the popular vote, 56 percent to 39 percent. Yet even against a unified business class, the shortcomings of capitalist development propelled the rise of workers' parties. In the pivotal 1970 elections, after Frei's policies—which included substantial land reform, labor protections and increased national participation in mining—went too far for capitalists yet not nearly far enough for the working poor, the UP surprisingly came out ahead of the split Christian-Democratic (CD) and oligarchic National Party candidates, with a 36 percent plurality.

The national security advisor and his boss could not contain their rage. No longer was Chile the harmless "dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica" in the irrelevant "southern portion of the world from the Pyrenees on down" that Kissinger had dismissed. Chile acquired unparalleled strategic primacy. As a national security memo requested by Kissinger himself elaborated, this was not due to any "vital national [economic] interests within Chile." Nor, as the same memo concluded, was

it driven by fears that “the world military balance of power would … be significantly altered by an Allende government.” The problem was the volatile grassroots militancy behind the UP. Reasserting American domination in Chile involved not only dealing with Allende and the UP on diplomatic and institutional levels; bringing the country back into the fold of inter-American capitalism then meant confronting a particularly independent and mobilized working class. With Washington facing concurrent nationalist challenges in the region, Kissinger was determined to squash the Chilean democratic revolution, lest the dogged radicalism of the country’s powerless classes resonate across its borders. But he did not enjoy a completely free hand. For three years, Kissinger’s interventionism was conditioned by tensions between the popular agitation to shape and deepen Allende’s reforms and UP’s politicians, who favored a measured and negotiated approach.

Kissinger’s brightest contrivance was to preempt Allende’s inauguration in order to avoid a clash between popular Chilean aspirations and Washington’s designs for the region. With the NSC’s approval, the CIA funneled money into the CD campaign, hoping that, despite business fractures, public opinion could be frightened away from looming Bolshevik totalitarianism. The $2.6 million pumped into the elections proved useless, though, so the State Department and the NSC turned to more sinister tactics. At the urging of top Chilean business leaders, Nixon and Kissinger, removing all restraint on covert US involvement, approved the CIA’s “firm and continuous policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup.” Efforts to topple Allende would be ongoing if necessary, but “it would be much preferable to have this transpire prior to the 24 October … utilizing every appropriate resource … implemented clandestinely and securely so that USG and American hand be well hidden.” Kissinger thus set in motion two strategies to impede Allende from assuming office.

The first step involved buying off legislators to persuade them to vote against Allende’s late October confirmation in Chile’s Congress, as per required convention in plurality outcomes. The idea was to force new elections in which Frei could run again. When this failed, owing largely to CD discord and the brave announcement of a pro-Allende vote by the party’s losing left-wing presidential candidate, the second course authorized by Kissinger kicked into gear.

The CIA now conspired to sabotage the impending inauguration extralegally by instigating a coup. The aim was to overturn normal legal procedures by creating an atmosphere of fear and panic. Unable to find capable collaborators, the Santiago station left planning in the hands of fringe officials, without solid ties to business or to leading military sections. Their botched kidnapping ended up killing the constitutionalist commander-in-chief, René Schneider Chereau, bloodying Santiago's streets. For the moment, the "firm and continuous" commitment to topple Allende receded from view.

Subversion, Sabotage and Sedition

The embarrassing failure to block Allende's inauguration gave the UP political and programmatic room to maneuver. American covert incompetence had forced Nixon and Kissinger into resuming a cooperative public stance, the latter reassuring ambassador Orlando Letelier—a close Allende advisor who, six years later, was blown to pieces on the streets of Washington, DC, in a Condor terror network car bombing—that the United States desired coexistence. With the United States bogged down in the taxing Indo-Chinese conflict and regional challenges emerging in Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia and Peru, Allende confidently pursued socialist reforms and expanded his support base.

His first order of policy was to nationalize the country's mines. Much like a petro-state, Chile is totally dependent on copper. At the time, Chilean copper supplied roughly one-seventh of global production and by 1970 accounted for over three-quarters of the country's export earnings. Most production was in the hands of transnationals, which made a killing avoiding taxes. Since Frei's reforms had failed to put the resource to use for national development and well-being, the UP enjoyed a broad consensus in favor of nationalization. But substantial changes to the copper industry could jolt the structure of US-led regional capitalism.

Unable to prevent nationalization of the mines and later stung by Santiago's influential diplomatic stroke in reestablishing ties with Havana, Washington was determined to impede any further successes. Having extended his time frame for toppling Allende, Kissinger set in motion three strands of destabilization: secret support for the anti-UP opposition, economic strangulation and infiltration of the armed forces.

As Nixon smoldered for having to momentarily accommodate those “ingrate Latins,” Kissinger funneled more cash into the opposition’s upcoming electoral campaigns to reverse Allende’s initial triumphs. The State Department and the CIA understood that business elites remained reluctant to pump money into the fractured opposition, but by helping to produce a solid showing of the center and right parties in the 1971 local elections, Kissinger aimed to nurture a domestic political force that would take the lead in subverting democracy.

He was disappointed. Allende’s coalition increased its backing to almost 50 percent, consolidating popular support for the Chilean road to socialism. The time had come for the NSC to take the gloves off and deploy more reliable methods. The State Department decided to intensify its unspoken blockade of the gaunt southern country while simultaneously deepening its influence among Chile’s armed forces. The former would be accomplished by choking Santiago’s access to multilateral credit, loans and trade preferences. The latter consisted of consolidating conspiratorial networks and, through generous materiél and funding packages, generating dependence on US foreign policy planners.

Growing mobilization and radicalization, however, shielded Allende from the mounting offensive. Not only was the UP able to handily achieve copper expropriation, which even the far right did not dare oppose, it also redistributed national income heavily toward the working class, intensified land reform and placed key areas of production and distribution under state and popular control. Strong grassroots approval and organization gave the president the confidence to adopt in September 1971 a compensation formula for expropriated mines. By calculating repayment according to excess profit assessments, it concluded that copper giants Kennecott and Anaconda actually owed Chileans!

Chile’s popular militants and movements had met the imperialist onslaught with effective resolve. In the regional arena, a surging Allende was anything but bashful. Taking note of Nixon’s China rapprochement and Soviet détente, the Chilean president and his advisors, though skeptical of public American amenability, successfully lobbied to host the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Allende spent months rallying the Global South to join Chile in rejecting US “diktats” and forging an independent and progressive development course.

Eventually, Kissinger's machinations to sabotage the economy and sow instability and treason began burrowing beneath the UP's favorable balance of forces. At the end of 1971, while the Treasury Department conveyed the rage of expropriated transnationals (and those fearing similar losses) and pushed Nixon to adopt a uniformly punitive policy, Kissinger continued to urge caution. But his trepidation had nothing to do with actual "realist" accommodation. He simply feared that open retaliation against Third World nationalists would aggravate widespread global anti-Americanism.

To buy time, Kissinger began a back-channel dialogue with Letelier before unleashing decisive aggression. His waited for a reversal in the living standards of the UP faithful and for a friendlier regional alignment prior to mercilessly turning screws. The opportunity to defeat Allende's challenge began crystallizing in the latter part of 1972, when domestic and international fights over the speed and scope of reforms came to a head.

Amid falling global copper prices, the US financial blockade and paltry Eastern bloc aid, domestic investment strikes began maiming the economy. The opposition had overcome its differences just as intensifying UP polarization levied self-inflicted wounds. Against the backdrop of dwindling export revenues, a rising deficit and an inflationary spiral, the CIA was able to covertly funnel American dollars with elite Chilean money into a devastating truckers' strike. With elite opposition divided, Kissinger found it difficult to coordinate funding that could trigger the chaos needed to lacerate the improved material realities of workers, the urban poor and middle layers. Then, the opposition rallied behind a shared determination to topple the UP once and for all and caused a $200 million dent in an already fragile economy.

As professional and business strikes spread over the limits to UP's nationalization policy, overt discord with Washington intensified over debt rescheduling negotiations in Paris. The Nixon administration formally linked American goodwill to Chilean backtracking in the mining compensation. But the tension went beyond corporate disputes; US recalcitrance was subsumed under the objectives of "overall relations with Chile." That is, quarrels over compensating American businesses were the means to the greater end of destroying Chile's socialist experiment. Accordingly, Nixon prolonged US participation in the Paris talks to exacerbate the country's woes. Kissinger's caution was turning into

optimism that economic strangulation was finally producing the background conditions necessary for united elites to topple Allende.

Disappearing the Workers' March

The UP entered 1973 in deep trouble. Industrial output had contracted and foodstuffs had shrunk by a quarter. With a trade deficit ballooning to almost $450 million, Washington's credit blockade made it impossible for Allende to close the gap. Ultimately, shifting and intensifying Chilean class struggle formed the decisive backdrop to Kissinger's schemes. General polarization helped elites who, facing the possibility of class extinction, overcame their differences to vanquish the UP threat. With the right and business class reconverging, Allende's program, and the growing popular tide that carried it, hit a wall. Amid ongoing working class mobilization, disagreements over how to confront the UP's existential dilemmas tore the coaltion into opposing camps. Popular forces not only stiffened elite recalcitrance; their divisions all but guaranteed workers' defenseless once the onslaught came.

At the end of 1972, the class conflict was temporarily attenuated from above by the state and by workers from below. Factory employees set up powerful parallel institutions, networked factory and neighborhood assemblies called *cordones industriales* to guarantee production, distribution, security and even military preparedness in the face of the elite offensive. Meanwhile, Allende restored a semblance of order by bringing the military into his cabinet. Both solutions carried new risks: the popular grassroots initiative fueled intra-UP polarization and encouraged the MIR (Revolutionary Left Movement) to push for a showdown; the double-edged decision to make top military men the arbiters of the Chilean road to socialism would likewise contribute to the catastrophic denouement within a year.

By the March 1973 parliamentary elections, Kissinger was convinced that demoralized workers would turn against their government; the additional $1.6 million he released to "optimize" the opposition's campaign reassured him further. Even with their parties and movements now irreconcilably polarized, however, popular sectors continued to defend Allende, giving the UP 44 percent of their vote. Realizing that the poor were not ready to trade power for bread, Washington foreign policy elites finally converged on the idea of a decisive coup. Whereas the CIA's

Santiago station chief urged direct intervention, Kissinger maintained reservations about the army, the military's crucial branch. However, these tactical restraints were easily ironed out in the pursuit of a strategic consensus around violently bringing the UP to heel—and he at last had a cohesive pro-coup domestic force with which he could play ball. The CD and the far right had also formed the Democratic Confederation (CODE) alliance, which subsequently won a legislative majority.

Eventually, schemes approved by Kissinger began to bear fruit. The CIA remained in the dark about Augusto Pinochet's commitments as the future dictator, just as it had no influence over the premature June *Tanquetazo* putsch. And though it remained frustrated by what it viewed as the top brass's indecision, it continued to weave the network of plotters who aimed to marginalize the constitutionalist brass and eventually "save" the country from the Marxist "cancer." After the conspirators drove out constitutionalist Carlos Prats, who would also become a Condor victim when his booby-trapped car exploded in Buenos Aires, he was replaced with the taciturn general. Pinochet fell under the influence of the CIA-groomed commanders; as army chief, he would later use his pivotal position to outmaneuver his junta peers and concentrate power in his hands.

The stage was set for the denouement that everyone now expected. In late August, the CODE congress members voted eighty-one to the UP's forty-seven in favor of a resolution inviting "authorities" "to put an immediate end" to "breach[es of] the Constitution … and ensuring the Constitutional order of our Nation." The coup plotters had their green light and Allende had run out of options. The CDs, whose senators were now colluding with the military, rejected all overtures for a negotiated resolution, while divisions within the left impeded the pursuit of any coherent initiative. All, including Kissinger in Washington, sat back to wait for the inevitable. With his own party now joining the MIR in its calls for armed confrontation, Allende's last gasp, a planned plebiscite on new elections—an institutional abdication—was preempted by Pinochet's eleventh-hour decision to join and lead the plotters. When Pinochet, a day after receiving Washington's blessings, made his move, the UP was paralyzed by its strategic disagreements. By contrast, led by the army, elite opposition was seamlessly coordinated.

Allende was convinced the coup attempt would be a momentary setback. In his final speech, immediately before the presidential palace was

bombarded and he ended his life rather than be taken by the military, he forecast:

> They may possibly crush us. But tomorrow will be for the people, for the workers, because humanity progresses toward the conquest of a better life … Foreign capital, imperialism, jointly with reaction, created the climate for the Armed Forces to break with tradition … privileged class guilds [acted] to defend the advantages that a capitalist society confers onto a small minority … [But] much sooner rather than later, the great *Alamedas* will again open up for free Man to march through in order to build a better society.

Allende's final prediction was far off the mark. The repression that ensued was ruthlessly methodical, as foretold by the ominous "Remember Jakarta" signs that had begun appearing across the capital. The national security advisor was instrumental in shaping and approving CIA backing for the junta's plans for "severe repression to stamp out all vestiges of Communism in Chile for good." As a memo to Kissinger tallied, hundreds of militants, as well as labor and student activists, were killed in the days following that September 11, and many more were rounded up and tortured. By the end of the decade, over 4,000 were either killed or disappeared, and tens of thousands had either passed through the regime's concentration camps or been forced into exile.

Though Chileans didn't suffer the death toll of neighboring Argentina, and thankfully escaped Indonesian levels of mass state murder, the layer of worker activists that had powered Chile's emancipatory march was wiped out. And with radical and popular organizations smashed, nothing could stop the sweeping institutional and economic changes that entrenched a new powerlessness among workers and the poor. The country would suffer almost forty years of dictatorship and neoliberal democracy before movements again filled the streets.

Naturally, Kissinger was jubilant. More than any other regional development, the desired outcome consolidated a trend that had begun with the 1970 coup in Bolivia and was further advanced by the Uruguayan coup in June. Within a year, the "dirty war" was underway in Argentina even before the coup against Juan Perón's widow.

Six years after his bald lie to Letelier, Kissinger traveled to Santiago and told another obvious untruth. Yet the day before his Organization of American States speech expressing US concerns over widespread human rights violations, he admitted the deception to the "friendly" dictator, assuring Pinochet that "we are not out to weaken your position." The

speech, he explained, was mere spectacle for public consumption. In reality, Washington would defend and provide cover for the regime. “We want to help, not undermine you. You did a great service to the West in overthrowing Allende. Otherwise … there would have been no human rights.”

Attributing the defense of human rights to Pinochet was typical Kissinger Orwellianism. But he was right about one thing: the coup was the product of Chilean elites and the military. Had they remained divided, American intervention would likely have failed, no matter Kissinger’s strategic clarity or abandonment of restraint. Conversely, once elites reunified, the dynamics of domestic class struggle would have produced the coup, even without effective US meddling. Still, Kissinger got what he wanted: the Southern Cone was much safer for US-led capitalism, and Washington had dealt with the most unwieldy challenge to its regional supremacy.

3

Kissinger in Argentina

Leandro Morgenfeld

Just after his 1969 inauguration, Richard Nixon sought to reset relations with Latin America and decided to send New York governor Nelson A. Rockefeller on a state trip to the region. The tour, which entailed visiting twenty Latin American countries, was plagued by protests and violent incidents, reminiscent of the difficult trip that Nixon himself had taken in 1958 as Dwight Eisenhower's vice president. Upon returning, Rockefeller submitted a report recommending the US government ease restrictions on foreign assistance to the region and grant Latin American countries special trade preferences, giving their exports access to the US market. Yet despite Nixon's promises to address Latin American governments' demands and the Rockefeller report's recommendations, economic assistance to the region subsequently decreased significantly.

In 1971, for example, only $463 million was distributed —50 percent less than the average given a decade before. In the midst of a deep economic crisis—which caused the dollar to devalue—Latin America wasn't a priority for Nixon and his national security advisor, in spite of public statements to the contrary. In the meantime, Juan Perón's return to power in Argentina—after seven years of dictatorship and eighteen years of his party's electoral proscription—eroded relations with Washington. Peronism dominated as a nationalist movement, rooted in a populist alliance with powerful unions.

After almost two decades in exile, Perón aimed to develop closer ties with Western Europe, hoping to conserve a margin of autonomy in policymaking decisions vis-à-vis the United States. But while certain limits on US interests were put in place —such as the establishment of a new law restricting foreign investments—the new administration actually sought an understanding with Washington, hoping to attract American capital. One of the many friendly gestures toward America in this period was the May 1974 signing of a convention confirming Argentina's commitment to the fight against drug trafficking, between the influential minister of social welfare, José López Rega, and US ambassador Robert C. Hill. Linking drug trafficking and terrorism, the agreement enlisted Argentina into the Nixon administration's new War on Drugs.

The incoming US policy coincided with Kissinger's announcement of a "New Dialogue" with Latin America at the Tlatelolco conference, a summit of regional foreign ministers held in February 1974. During the conference, Nixon's government attempted to diffuse the growing anti-American sentiment after the military overthrow of Salvador Allende. He promised to resolve the Panama Canal conflict and, in a context of global economic crisis and falling European demand for the region's primary products, review commercial and financial measures affecting Latin America. Despite the promised new outlook, though, it amounted to a modification of the "carrot and stick" policies of the past.

A few months later, the State Department—headed by Kissinger—presaged this new era in its relationship with the United States' Latin American "backyard." This was done at a moment of relative weakness for the North American superpower, after its inglorious withdrawal from the Vietnam War, the economic crisis and the Watergate scandal that had recently broken out and which ultimately led to Nixon's resignation.

Immediately following his appointment as secretary of state, Kissinger met with Argentine foreign minister Alberto Juan Vignes in October 1973 and conveyed the economic concessions the United States was willing to offer in line with the New Dialogue policy. Highlighting Argentina's crucial role in making the new policy work, Kissinger convinced his counterpart to align himself as Latin America's White House mouthpiece. Despite its origins in a Republican government, the New Dialogue's dual strategy of concessions and pressures closely resembled the approach applied a decade earlier by its Democrat predecessors following the Cuban Revolution.

Indeed, even the shining promises made after Rockefeller's tour had been thrown out.

Nixon appointed Kissinger as secretary of state in September 1973, months before the beginning of the Isabel Perón administration (1974–76). After Juan Perón's death on July 1, 1974, his wife and successor, Isabel, had to confront a growing economic crisis, which only ended in 1975 with the so-called "Rodrigazo"—an adjustment via devaluation implemented by the economics minister, Celestino Rodrigo, that sparked a wave of strike actions against the government. This chain of events only weakened Perón's fragile political base. Her government needed international loans, heightening Argentina's dependence on Washington and international financial organizations. But it pursued a contradictory foreign policy.

Announcing the nationalization of gas service stations belonging to oil giants Shell and Exxon, the new administration abandoned the confrontational position in the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted before Juan Perón's return by interim president Héctor Cámpora. Following Kissinger's script, Vignes lobbied for the then-Argentine ambassador to the United States, Alejandro Orfila, to be named the new secretary-general of the OAS. Orfila, who was viewed positively by the White House, would improve the bilateral relationship and attract US investments.

But Argentina's sudden about-face, intended to appease Kissinger, who ostensibly wanted to ease inter-American relations, was not reciprocated—the United States did not offer the political and financial support that Argentina expected in return. US banking interests and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) held on to loans that were already approved for the country in the final months of Isabel Perón's administration, encouraging sectors plotting to overthrow the government. In spite of warnings from US diplomats and Capitol Hill, which had been under Democratic control since 1975, Kissinger vigorously backed the imminent military coup, just as he had two and a half years earlier in Chile.

The fall of Isabel Perón's administration on March 24, 1976, shifted the country's relationship with the United States. Although the CIA didn't directly intervene in the military overthrow as it had in Chile, it lent political, economic and military support to the dictatorship. José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz's economic plan convinced Gerald Ford's administration

to provide financial and military support to the military junta led by Jorge Rafael Videla that lasted from 1976 to 1981. The economics minister, according to the White House, was a guarantor for US financial interests in the region. Further, following several political upsurges—starting with the 1969 citywide industrial rebellion known as the Cordobazo and Peronism's traumatic return in 1973—the armed forces assured Kissinger that the country would continue down the path of Western, Christian and anti-communist values. The military junta represented a bulwark against subversion and a safeguard for US national security.

This was music to the ears of the Republican administration, in spite of concerns voiced on Capitol Hill and in the State Department over the systematic repression occurring in Argentina. In the first three years of the dictatorship, thousands of militants and labor, student and community activists were killed or disappeared. In 1984, the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP) issued the *Nunca Más* report, which documented more than 340 secret detention centers and almost 9,000 forced disappearances, noting that the number of victims was surely higher. Trade unionists, students, journalists and activists, including the mothers of state terror victims of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo—some of whom were themselves kidnapped and disappeared—were targeted by the dictatorship and brutally tortured for weeks or even months. Some 500 children, most of them babies, were stolen and given to families supporting the regime under false identities. (In the ensuing years, the Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo have recovered the identities of 120 of these kidnapped infants.) The military government imposed a strict censorship regime in order to suppress all criticism and demonstrations. Still, thousands of exiles tried to publicize this genocide in the United States and Europe, hoping to exert international pressure against the Argentine dictatorship. Videla's regime wanted to avoid these criticisms, but he was aware that, during a presidential election year in the United States, it would be difficult for the White House to provide unconditional support publicly to a military junta that was responsible for carrying out mass murder and internal repression.

Two days after the coup, Kissinger and the assistant secretary of state, William D. Rogers, discussed how the White House should respond to the military overthrow and ensuing state terror in Argentina. Rogers predicted looming bloodshed, and, hoping to avoid repeating the errors in Chile and Uruguay, advised caution; Kissinger, on the other hand, believed that the

junta required US backing and should in no way feel pressured by Washington.

By June, the CIA was involved in Operation Condor—the coordinated system of repression set up by the regimes of Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Peru and Paraguay to secretly assassinate political opponents. Yet the State Department viewed Videla as a moderate in Argentina's junta and avoided rebuking him directly, lest criticism facilitate his overthrow by hardliners.

In contrast to other Southern Cone examples, US involvement in Argentina proceeded from a distance. Unlike the overt support given to the 1964 coup that toppled João Goulart's administration in Brazil and the active involvement in setting the stage for and planning Allende's overthrow, the hands-off approach to the 1976 military overthrow responded to the need to uphold formal support for Latin American democracies. But more than nonintervention, Kissinger headed a policy of duplicity, publicly proclaiming concerns over human rights violations while privately supporting the state terrorism that came to the awareness of the State Department just weeks into the military takeover.

In two secret meetings between Kissinger and Argentina's foreign minister, César Augusto Guzzetti, on June and September 1976, Kissinger, aware of impending congressional scrutiny, pledged his support for the regime's dirty war. The first meeting was in Santiago de Chile, two days after an encounter between Kissinger and Pinochet in the presidential office. Kissinger praised Guzzetti for Argentina's fight against subversion and terrorism, sympathetically explaining, "We are aware you are in a difficult period. It is a curious time, when political, criminal and terrorist activities tend to merge without any clear separation. We understand you must establish authority." Regarding state terrorism, he added, "if there are things that have to be done, you should do them quickly. But you should get back quickly to normal procedures." According to Robert Hill, the US ambassador to Buenos Aires at that time, the junta got the message; the encounter was correctly interpreted as a green light to hastily unleash its terror. Historian Stephen G. Rabe has explained that the US diplomat in Argentina "protested these atrocities and provided Washington with explicit accounts of what was happening in Argentina. For his humanity, Ambassador Hill merited a rebuke for contesting, in Kissinger's words, 'my policy.'"

After months of unwavering support, the situation began to shift in January, when the Democrats returned to the White House. One of Carter's goals was to establish respect for human rights as a central plank of US foreign policy, with foreign aid conditional upon clean records in this area. But the promotion of human rights launched under Carter would advance only to the extent that it aligned with the US strategy for reimposing global hegemony. This selective denunciation of human rights violations characterized Washington's policy in relation to the Argentine dictatorship.

Accordingly, the United States condemned the flagrant human rights violations committed by Videla's regime and, from 1978, suspended military assistance to Argentina. Of course, Washington's rediscovered interest in human rights was governed by a double standard. As it sanctioned violations in Argentina, it failed to denounce Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile. Nor did the United States condemn Operation Condor, which was facilitated by the CIA. As historian William Michael Schmidli has documented, Carter's arrival in 1977 marked a shift from Kissinger's realist perspective—useful for justifying alliances with South American dictatorships—to a more idealistic view that factored in ethical standards. Argentina became a test case for understanding the reach and limits of the United States' new foreign policy in Latin America.

Kissinger's position toward the region's dictatorships—particularly his support for Pinochet—was fundamental in encouraging the Argentine military coup in 1976 and extending American support to the junta, despite increasing domestic opposition from Democrats in the run-up to the November presidential election of that year. Even in 1978, with criticisms of Videla's human rights violations mounting, Kissinger attended the World Cup, inexplicably hosted by Argentina during the military's reign of terror. He even joined the dictator in visiting the soccer players' locker room following a tense game in which the local team beat Peru six to zero, and Argentina went on to win the cup. Kissinger's influential presence, shoulder to shoulder with the de facto Argentine president, at the center of international attention during the global soccer tournament, was a high-profile signal of support. It was unequivocally designed to counter pressure from Patricia Derian, the assistant secretary of state for human rights.

In sum, although Kissinger acted more cautiously than in recent years, he welcomed the arrival of the military dictatorship, giving it diplomatic and political cover inside the State Department. The United States–

Argentina relationship underwent an important change with the March 1976 coup. When it became known that Martínez de Hoz, who had close relations with David Rockefeller and US banking interests, would be appointed economics minister, financial backing then also followed. Videla rapidly proclaimed his administration's alignment with the West, with the fight against communism, and followed the National Security Doctrine as central regime policy. This earned him immediate and unwavering support from Kissinger. However, conflicts with Washington reappeared with the advent of the Carter administration, when human rights promotion became a central US foreign policy concern and recurring point of conflict with the Argentine dictatorship.

A mere four years later, under Ronald Reagan's presidency, human rights were pushed back into the degraded area of hushed diplomacy that Kissinger preferred; "observations" about these sensitive issues had to now be addressed via private dialogue, not public policy. Two months after assuming power, Reagan announced plans to convince Congress to remove bans on armament sales and military supplies to Argentina. In July, the policy of voting against loans for Argentina from international financial institutions based on human rights was tossed out.

Kissinger's policies were back.

4

Kissinger in Central America

Hilary Goodfriend

When Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, Central America was in flames. Long a semifeudal paradise for tyrannical oligarchs and US monopolies, the region was then consumed by revolutionary and counterrevolutionary violence.

In 1979, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) had overthrown the US-backed Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua, igniting the hopes of revolutionaries throughout the isthmus and lighting a fire under the cold warriors in Washington. In 1980, five leftist organizations united in El Salvador to form the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). In Guatemala, where the United States helped overthrow a democratic reformist government in 1954, leftist insurgents had been waging an unsuccessful but persistent battle against the military regime since the 1960s; by 1982, four guerilla forces had merged to form the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG).

Under President Carter, US aid to Central America dropped to historic lows. Assistance to Guatemala was cut off over human rights concerns, and military aid to El Salvador was also restricted. In 1979, however, things changed. After an October coup ousted a president who had been elected two years earlier in a vote broadly denounced as fraudulent, Carter restored nonlethal military assistance to El Salvador. The administration hoped that the new “centrist” junta would achieve in El Salvador what the United

States hadn’t in Nicaragua—namely, tempering revolutionary aspirations and installing a modestly reformist, US-friendly bourgeoisie democracy. But El Salvador’s recalcitrant elites forcefully opposed the junta’s land reform proposal, and the government’s civilian members were soon forced out.[1]

In February 1980, San Salvador Archbishop Óscar Romero wrote to President Carter, asking him to “forbid that military aid be given to the Salvadoran government; [and] to guarantee that [his] government will not intervene directly or indirectly, with military, economic, diplomatic, or other pressures, in determining the destiny of the Salvadoran people.”[2] Carter never replied, and Romero was assassinated five weeks later, gunned down by US-backed paramilitary forces while celebrating mass. Following the gruesome murders of four North American churchwomen in December, assistance to the country was briefly suspended. But the Carter administration quickly resumed its support, including lethal military aid, after the FMLN launched a major offensive in January 1981.

By 1983, Reagan had tripled US aid to the isthmus. Support to Nicaragua was severed save that destined for opposition groups, while aid to Guatemala was restored. From next to nothing in the late 1970s, military aid levels soared.[3] Fresh from Vietnam’s humiliations, the neocons were sure that Central America would provide the decisive victory America needed to reassert its prowess.

But gains were illusory. The FSLN held firm to power, despite North American sponsorship of a covert insurgent war against the Sandinistas waged largely from Honduras, which became so overrun by the US military that it was referred to as the “USS Honduras.” Meanwhile, the Guatemalan state was waging a genocidal war against rural indigenous communities, and the Salvadoran military and its associated death squads were drawing international condemnation for their flagrant disregard for civilian life. Joan Didion wrote in 1982 that “the American effort in El Salvador seemed based on auto-suggestion, a dreamwork devised to obscure any intelligence that might trouble the dreamer.”[4]

With his policies under fire and a reelection campaign looming, in 1983 Reagan convened the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America. The president hoped that the commission would legitimize his administration’s ongoing activities in the isthmus in the face of significant

opposition in Congress and in the streets, to say nothing of the international community. He appointed Henry Kissinger as its chair.

For Kissinger, as Greg Grandin writes in his biography of "America's most controversial statesman," the new role gave him "the chance to establish his credibility and reconcile with the Right" after Reagan himself had led the charge in lambasting the diplomat and his trademark strategy of détente as responsible for the United States' recent failures on the world stage, both moral and military.[5] Prepared to prove himself to the neocons, Kissinger was quick to agree that Central America was just the place to regain ground on both counts.

As evidence mounted of appalling human rights violations by the governments that Reagan championed as Central America's warriors for democracy, Kissinger's commission needed to convince Congress to keep the arms, training and cash coming. "Without the necessary funds," warned the Great Communicator in a July 1983 speech announcing the commission, "there's no way for us to prevent the light of freedom from being extinguished in Central America."[6]

The Report

Kissinger presided over a twelve-man team, which included a handful of politicians from both sides of the aisle, a couple of academics, business and military men, and the president of the AFL-CIO. The group included no Central Americans—or women, for that matter. The only woman's name to grace the commission's report was that of notorious neocon ideologue Jeane Kirkpatrick, who served as senior counselor to the commission. After a month and a half of meetings, including a whirlwind nine-day tour of Central America, Mexico and Venezuela, the group published its findings in January 1984.

Kissinger's greatest challenge was to portray local revolutionary movements as foreign conspiracies more alien than the United States' own interventions. Even as the report acknowledged that authoritarian violence and repression wrought by ruling elites had systematically foreclosed the possibility of democratic reforms, it stubbornly disqualified the insurgencies and radical opposition movements fighting for dignity, equality and self-determination as outside intrusions. As journalist Belén

Fernández has observed, the commission at times even appeared to suggest that Cuba is not in fact located within the hemisphere, but rather in some Soviet hinterland.[7]

In its report, the commission desperately reiterated this tortured logic:

> We have stressed before, and we repeat here: indigenous reform movements, even indigenous revolutions, are not themselves a security concern of the United States … What gives the current situation its special urgency is the external threat posed by the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua which is supported by massive Cuban military strength, backed by Soviet and other East bloc weapons, guidance and diplomacy, and integrated into the Cuban network of intelligence and subversion.[8]

The argument was not particularly convincing. A review in *Foreign Affairs* found that the commission

> never successfully resolves the tension between US security interests in the area and the admitted need for radical change in many Central American societies … As policy is currently conceived, in order to fight that intrusion [of foreign aggressors] the United States must depend on precisely those forces that have always stood in the way of significant indigenous revolution, thus eventually forcing the advocates of radical change to rely for support on Cuban or Soviet backing.[9]

El Salvador particularly preoccupied the Reagan administration. Reports of the regime's atrocities had sparked widespread public outcry, and in 1981, France and Mexico officially recognized the insurgency as a legitimate and representative political force.[10] Reagan and his colleagues saw the tiny country as a crucial battleground: an FMLN victory would embolden the Sandinistas, and by extension the Cubans, and by extension the Soviets, setting off a chain reaction of red victories that would sweep northward toward US borders; the insurgency's defeat, in turn, would cement US hegemony in Central America. A key part of Kissinger's task was to convey the magnitude of this threat to Congress.

Against all evidence, Kissinger's report strained to equate the scope of Salvadoran state violence with that of the opposition. "Both traditionalist death squads and murderous guerillas have attacked political party, labor, and peasant leaders working to establish and consolidate democratic institutions," it claimed, assuring readers that "both violent groups are morally and politically repugnant to this Commission."[11]

The report suggested that "curbing the insurgent's violence in El Salvador requires, in part, cutting them off from their sources of foreign

support."[12] But the Salvadoran military understood all too well that the guerillas' principal bastion of support was domestic. Already, the generals were using their US arms, intelligence and training to deploy a strategy of "draining the sea to kill the fish," deliberately targeting civilian communities with terror, mass extermination, and displacement. This was also the counterinsurgency strategy employed by their Guatemalan counterparts under the leadership of war criminals like Efraín Ríos Montt, whom the Commission fondly referred to as "the maverick General."[13]

In reality, it was US aid that perpetuated the violence in El Salvador. "The worst possible policy for El Salvador is to provide just enough aid to keep the war going, but too little to wage it successfully," Kissinger argued,[14] claiming that more support would actually improve the dismal human rights situation: "a vicious cycle results in which violence and denial of human rights spawn reductions in aid, and reductions in aid make more difficult the pursuit of an enlightened counter-insurgency effort."[15]

The report did recommend conditioning the increased military aid "on progress in the effort to bring death squads under control."[16] However, in the final notes, Kissinger joined two other commissioners in expressing their "strong view that neither the Congress nor the Executive Branch interpret conditionality in a manner that leads to a Marxist-Leninist victory in El Salvador, thereby damaging vital American interests and risking a larger war."[17]

Similarly, the commission observed that military aid to Guatemala, currently suspended, "could become necessary" and should be authorized under the appropriate conditions.[18] Kissinger also called for increasing military aid to Honduras. His commission declined to officially opine in favor or against aiding the Contras, as the Nicaraguan counterrevolutionaries were known, but noted that

> the majority of the members of the Commission, in their respective individual judgments, believe that the efforts of the Nicaraguan insurgents represent one of the incentives working in favor of a negotiated settlement and that the future role of the United States in those efforts must therefore be considered in the context of the negotiating process.[19]

As the United States was propping up homicidal military regimes in the name of staving off communism, it was also striving to implement a particularly ruthless breed of capitalism in the region. Kissinger was no

stranger to either endeavor. As secretary of state under Nixon, he'd supported the Chilean right-wing military coup against Salvador Allende and encouraged the newly installed dictatorship to liberalize the economy according to the recipes of free market fundamentalist Milton Friedman, all while engaging in mass executions, disappearances and torture. When neoliberalism's militarized laboratory shifted from South to Central America, Kissinger dutifully followed.

Though couched in the language of development, the commission's economic recommendations served the same agenda. "What is now required is a firm commitment by the Central American countries to economic policies, including reforms in tax systems, to encourage private enterprise and individual initiative, to create favorable investment climates," the report intoned.[20] Characteristically, the commission declared that "US corporations, active in the region, have a particular responsibility to provide leadership in creating safe and healthy [working] conditions, as well as to introduce appropriate standards of environmental pollution control in their own operations," but suggested no measures to enforce such duties.[21]

The 130-page document displayed a brazen disregard for history—a Kissinger signature if there ever was one. "Perhaps," it read,

> over the years, we should have intervened less, or intervened more, or intervened differently. But all these are questions of what might have been. What confronts us now is a question of what might become. Whatever its roots in the past, the crisis in Central America exists urgently in the present, and its successful resolution is vital to the future.[22]

Of course, such disdain for the lessons of the past was necessary to justify the commission's calls for more of the same failed policies. Walter LaFeber wrote that the report "combined ideas from Reagan's military policy, Kennedy's Alliance for Progress, and Eisenhower's use of the CIA."[23] All told, the commission recommended $8 billion in development aid and $400 million in military aid to Central America over the next five years.

Mission Accomplished

Congress balked at the enormity of the sum. Rabid anti-communist Jesse Helms, chair of the Western Hemisphere subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee at the time, declared that "the report is a mandate for

socialism, financed by the US taxpayer."[24] Nevertheless, Kissinger did succeed in garnering support for a significant increase.

From 1984 to 1987, aid to Central America would peak. The Salvadoran government, in particular, benefited from Kissinger's persuasive talents. A 1989 Congressional Research Service review found that thanks to the report, "the base for congressional support for US economic and military assistance to El Salvador seems to have widened." Aid to the country, which reached its height in 1985 with nearly $700 million, made up nearly half of all aid to the region. Guatemala was also rewarded, becoming Central America's second largest recipient by 1988.[25]

The increase, however, had little civilizing effect on the Central American militaries, nor did it bring a swift and decisive end to the region's conflicts. Despite the Iran-Contra scandal nearly bringing down the Reagan presidency, the failing Contra War was obstinately sustained until the Sandinistas' 1990 electoral loss. War raged on in El Salvador until 1992, when United Nations–brokered negotiations reached a settlement. Guatemala did not sign its peace accords until 1996.

The Kissinger Commission appealed for greater support for governments systematically massacring their own people by warning that "the insurgents, if they win, will create a totalitarian regime in the image of their sponsors' ideology and their own."[26] Looking back, however, it is hard to find more deplorable regimes than those that Kissinger helped to shore up. In El Salvador, some 75,000 were killed during the conflict, with tens of thousands more disappeared; the 1993 UN Truth Commission attributed 85 percent of this violence to the government and its paramilitaries, and only 5 percent to the FMLN.[27] The Guatemalan Truth Commission found that the war claimed 200,000 lives, 83 percent of them Mayan; state forces were responsible for 93 percent of the violence.[28] As many as 40,000 lives were lost in the Contra War in Nicaragua.[29]

But where human rights and democracy failed, capitalism flourished. Beginning in the late 1980s, the US-backed governments in the region forced through deeply unpopular neoliberal reforms, gutted public spending, devalued their currencies, raised sales taxes, implemented sweeping deregulation and created dramatic tax incentives for foreign corporations, including the establishment of special tax-free industrial zones for low-wage manufacturing plants or *maquiladoras*, in exchange for US

aid and international loans. These efforts were particularly acute in El Salvador, where the banks, the state energy and telecommunications companies, major port operations, the pension system, and myriad other public institutions and services were privatized,[30] and in Honduras, which auctioned off its rich natural resources for hydroelectric dams, mining and monocultures, and eventually pioneered the privatization of entire cities.[31] These processes culminated with the 2006 implementation of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

Predictably, the victor has been private—often North American—capital. Central America's poor majorities have faced displacement, ecological destruction and miserable working conditions. This economic devastation fed a tide of mass migration northward and an escalating security crisis as Central American societies—ravaged as they were by decades, even centuries, of exploitation and violence—were further torn apart by the shocks of structural adjustment. As contemporary administrations have grappled with the compounding consequences of decades of US intervention in Central America, the bipartisan consensus for militarism and neoliberalization that Reagan dispatched Kissinger to achieve has never been stronger.

Today, the martyred Salvadoran Archbishop Óscar Romero is Saint Óscar Romero. But Kissinger, too, has undergone a sanctification of his own by the US political establishment. Romero's beatification is a symbolic but significant gesture by the Vatican that places the United States squarely on the wrong side of history; the veneration of Kissinger, on the other hand, shows our determination to learn nothing from it.

Europe

5

Kissinger in Cyprus

Leandros Fischer

Ask anyone over the age of fifty in the Republic of Cyprus which single individual is to blame for the island's ongoing division, and the answer will be almost unanimous: Henry Kissinger. He was US secretary of state during the fateful summer of 1974, when Turkish troops occupied the island following a Greek-sponsored coup. As such, many Greek Cypriots view him as the architect of American support for both the Greek and Turkish interventions that have divided the island in its present form.

Kissinger's image today rests on two pillars. On one hand, his admirers will remember him as a cunning diplomat who paved the way for US-led "peace" initiatives in the Middle East and drew China away from the Soviets. On the other hand, he is more accurately regarded as a Machiavellian figure whose policies left a trail of blood from Santiago to East Timor. Kissinger's role in Cyprus is interesting, because its overall balance sheet lies in the intersection of both of these perceptions: while Kissinger engaged in a balance-of-power game in the Eastern Mediterranean in 1974, the consequences of his actions signaled nothing but misery for thousands of people, and they solidified Cyprus' ethnic divisions.

To be fair, the outline of Kissinger's policies toward Cyprus was inherited from previous US administrations. In close proximity to the Middle East, Cyprus's strategic location made it a prize for any power

wishing to control the flow of oil and the entrance to the Suez Canal. The island's troubles began when the British strengthened emerging divisions between the island's Greek-speaking majority and its Turkish-speaking minority. This, however, did not happen all at once. Terrified by the island's growing communist movement in the 1940s, the British strengthened the Greek Cypriot bourgeoisie as a counterweight. This bourgeoisie, however, which coalesced politically around the powerful Orthodox Church, always had an ambivalent attitude toward the British; their stance oscillated between collaboration and wishing for *enosis,* or union with Greece.

While in pursuit of its national project, the bourgeoisie had clashed with the British in 1955, engaging in guerrilla struggle against a bloody counterinsurgency campaign by London. Hoping to contain the situation, the British exploited Turkish Cypriot concerns about Greek nationalism by encouraging Turkish involvement on the island. This only hardened the divide between the two communities, as well as the ensuing political stalemate. As a compromise between Greek demands for union with Greece and Turkish demands for partition, the British negotiated an independent status for Cyprus in 1959, leaving Greek Archbishop Makarios in power, alongside a Turkish vice president with significant veto powers. In order to keep Cyprus within the Western sphere of influence, Britain retained military installations, and rights of intervention by Britain, Turkey and Greece were inscribed in the independence treaties.

The United States Strives for Partition

Makarios's assigned role was that of a tame postcolonial ruler who held an unquestioned loyalty toward the West—and in many ways this was the case. An ardent anti-communist, his main objective was to complete the Greek national project on the island and do away with what he termed Turkish "super-privileges." But his attempt to do so in 1963 led to an intense revival of bloody intercommunal strife, as well as threats of Turkish intervention. Hoping to achieve his goals through peaceful means, Makarios made overtures to the Soviet Union and the Non-Aligned Movement. The situation on the island was already beginning to cause friction between Greece and Turkey, both indispensable allies of the United States. Together with Makarios' independent posturing, this made Cyprus a top concern for

the United States, which had by then replaced Britain as the dominant power in the Middle East.

Increasingly, the United States began to view partitioning Cyprus as the best possible outcome for their interests. To this end, the administration of Lyndon Johnson proposed a secret settlement in 1964, whereby the bulk of Cyprus would unite with Greece, and Turkey would retain a large military base at the island's northeastern tip. Drafts of the plan were viewed favorably by both Greece and Turkey, but Makarios rejected these, refusing to concede Cyprus' independence. This only deepened American suspicion toward Makarios, and this concern was eventually passed to the State Department under Kissinger.

The sequence of events that led to the island's partition did not begin in Washington, but in Athens. Fearing the election of a slightly left-of-center government in 1967, the military intervened, imposing a brutal dictatorship. The "Colonels' junta," as it was known, was deeply unpopular, not just in Greece but among many Europeans. However, this did not prevent Western governments, first and foremost the United States, from treating it as a respectable partner in the context of NATO.

For the existence of the regime, the colonels, many of them CIA assets, enjoyed Washington's generous support. The United States had built Greece's post–civil war "deep state" and intimately knew the dealings of almost every level of government. It is quite plausible, then, to assume that the United States not only had firsthand knowledge of the junta's plan toward Cyprus, but that the junta would not execute any of these goals without US approval.

Infuriated by Makarios's insolence toward them, the junta's Greek officers who staffed the Greek Cypriot National Guard began conspiring with far-right factions on the island who accused Makarios of betraying enosis. The hatred intensified as Makarios increasingly tapped the mass support of Cyprus's communist party, AKEL (Progressive Party of Working People), while facing several unsuccessful assassination attempts.

By 1969, Kissinger was Nixon's national security advisor. He thus inherited the standard line of thinking toward Cyprus prevalent within the US foreign policy establishment. In his book *Years of Renewal*, he explicitly described Makarios as "the proximate cause of most of Cyprus' tensions." But was he the one behind the efforts to topple Makarios, efforts that multiplied exponentially during that period? Was he as heavily

involved in those plans as he was in the conspiracies against Salvador Allende? Most likely not. He didn't have to be, as the junta's hatred for Makarios had a dynamic of its own. But he certainly did not object, either. As a regime with an extremely narrow base of support, the junta was heavily dependent on US political backing. Given its extensive knowledge of the junta's inner dealings, the United States would have no trouble in pulling the plug on any action deemed contradictory to their vital interests.

Apocalypse in July

The junta's precarious position was revealed in November 1973. That month, students at Athens's Polytechnic University barricaded themselves in the campus, setting up an amateur radio station that transmitted a message of defiance to the military regime. Widespread support for the students in the streets of Athens revealed the extent of the junta's unpopularity. The junta's strongman, Georgios Papadopoulos, was toppled and replaced by Dimitrios Ioannides, an even more uncompromising figure.

The new leadership commenced its plans to depose Makarios. Greek meddling in Cyprus forced Makarios to drop the veneer of "Greek brotherhood" and openly accuse the junta of intervening in internal politics. It was to no avail: on July 15, 1974, military units loyal to the junta staged a coup against him. The president narrowly escaped, making his way to the island's Royal Air Force base. From there he flew to London and then to New York, where he denounced the junta's intervention before the United Nations.

As Christopher Hitchens wrote in *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, Kissinger had received explicit warning about the junta's plans from an official at the State Department two months before the coup—but Kissinger had done nothing. (It is worth mentioning here that Hitchens's first book, *Hostage to History*, was about Cyprus. He had spent some time there in the mid-1970s and was married to a Cypriot woman.) As the coup unfolded, the junta imposed a CIA asset, Nikos Sampson, as president. As with the Honduran coup over three decades later, the United States maintained a policy of ambivalence toward the new regime. Even after the junta collapsed in Athens following the outcry over its incompetence in the face of the Turkish invasion, the United States worked together with Glafcos

Clerides, the conservative speaker of the House of Representatives, to prevent Makarios's return as the island's legitimate president.

A Greek coup was feared for some time. But it was common knowledge on the island and beyond that such a coup would provoke Turkish intervention, ostensibly to protect the Turkish minority. So when it did take place and Turkey invaded five days later, the common explanation on the island was that since both the junta and Turkey were US allies, and since Kissinger was calling the shots in Washington, the events could be nothing but a conspiracy engineered by the secretary of state.

The Turkish invasion that followed was accomplished in two phases. The first phase involved the creation of a beachhead north of Nicosia and a link with Turkish Cypriot enclaves. Soon after, the new regime in Athens collapsed. The second phase took place on August 15, following the failure of peace talks in Geneva. During this time, the Turkish government was given a green light for its actions by Kissinger, while it ethnically cleansed around 200,000 Greek Cypriots from the island's north. Meanwhile, the putschists massacred countless Turkish Cypriots in "retaliation." In the immediate aftermath of the invasion, the US-backed Clerides, acting as president while Makarios was still in exile, signed a population exchange agreement that saw thousands of Turks relocated to the north. The division of Cyprus was finalized.

Many questions emerged following the events. Why did the junta decide (or was allowed by the United States) to act now? Was the junta involved in a covert deal with the United States and Turkey to divide the island? Did Kissinger mastermind the coup and the Turkish invasion? Would another American administration have acted differently? The Greek colonels, for their part, cried betrayal after their fall, claiming they were given US assurances that Turkey would not intervene. A very likely scenario is that the new version of the junta was conscious of its precarious position and tried to pull a public relations stunt to save its fortunes. It was well aware of Greece's strategic significance for the United States and was hoping to present Turkey with a fait accompli.

Kissinger probably knew all of that, but he also knew that Turkey would intervene in accordance with the rights granted to it by Cyprus's independence treaties. For him the configuration of events provided the United States with an opportunity to realize its objectives in Cyprus without having to actively pursue them. Kissinger's role in Cyprus must be seen in

connection with his policies following the 1973 October War between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Skillfully leaving Israel to bleed until a massive American airlift changed the tide of the war, he demonstrated to the Arabs Israel's heavy reliance on the United States, thus signaling that any peace deal must be conditioned on US interests.

By allowing Greece and Turkey to intervene in Cyprus, he similarly engaged in a demonstration of US power that further pushed the Soviet Union away from the region. While the latter condemned the Turkish invasion, it was not going to intervene to save the far-right regime installed by Athens. In the spirit of détente, it passively accepted the Americans' predominance in the Eastern Mediterranean. Makarios returned to the island at the end of the year. He was not killed, but this was not an immediate objective of US foreign policy; unlike Allende, his government, for all the US paranoia about the "Castro of the Mediterranean," did not threaten the interests of any Western multinationals. It was sufficient to show the Cypriot government the extent to which US allies would be let loose, in order to deter any independent moves in the international arena.

The Aftermath

The events produced an anti-American backlash in Cyprus, since Kissinger was seen as the prime instigator of the events. Anti-American demonstrations gripped the island, while Makarios openly attacked his role. America's image suffered, but its primary goals were fulfilled. In the United States, lobbying by the Greek community in Congress pushed through a US arms embargo on Turkey. Turkey reacted by closing down US installations and pursuing warmer relations with the Soviet Union. This was short-lived, however, as the fall of the shah in Iran brought both countries closer again.

In some ways, the fixation on Kissinger in Cyprus served political aims. By claiming the Turkish invasion was Kissinger's own making, the right could claim that the new Carter administration, acting in accordance with the wishes of the Greek lobby, would be more supportive of Greek Cypriots. This was, of course, not true, as realpolitik usually takes precedence over ethnic lobbying. For the Cypriot left, the idea of a Kissinger conspiracy and a backroom deal between the "unpatriotic" junta and Turkey legitimized AKEL's patriotic popular front line of unconditional

support for Makarios, while it deflected attention from the Soviet Union's acquiescence to Turkey's invasion.

Would another US government have acted the same way? It is difficult to say. The main feature of Kissinger's Cyprus policy was its unilateralism. He bypassed the British, who were much more sympathetic to Makarios. Kissinger simply grabbed the opportunity in the situation, as the public's focus on the Watergate scandal probably allowed him to act with less accountability. But the outline of his actions was not his—he was simply following the textbook on the preservation of American global power.

Middle East and Africa

6

Kissinger in Angola

Piero Gleijeses

For Ronald Reagan and a great many Americans, the arrival of Cuban troops in Angola in 1975 epitomized the poisoned fruit of détente.[1] The way they saw it, the Soviets had dared for the first time to engage in a massive military intervention in Africa; they had pushed their Cuban proxies forward; and they had found this act of naked aggression both painless and profitable. President Ford and Kissinger had been unable to devise an effective response. They had "blustered and made demands unbacked by action," Reagan charged. This narrative contains only one element of truth: Kissinger and Ford had fumbled in response to the Cuban intervention in Angola.

The backdrop of the story is straightforward. In the late 1950s, France and Britain—Africa's major colonial powers—had concluded that delaying the inevitable end of their imperial rule would risk turning the local elites into enemies, whereas promptly granting independence would allow the metropoles to retain economic and political influence in their former colonies. Belgium had followed suit.

But Portugal bucked the tide. As a result, in the early 1960s armed struggle broke out in Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. This posed a serious problem for American policymakers. The US Air Force had critical military facilities at the Lajes air base in the Azores, which meant Washington wanted to remain friendly with Portugal without appearing to

support its colonial wars in Africa. From the Kennedy through the Nixon administrations, American officials asserted that the United States sold weapons to Portugal only on the condition that they not be used in Africa. But the Portuguese diverted the weapons there anyway. “We would have been fools not to have done so,” a Portuguese general remarked. “Now and then the Americans would grumble. It was all for show.”

In April 1974, Portuguese military officers overthrew their country’s dictatorship. They moved quickly toward decolonization: Guinea-Bissau became independent in September 1974 and Mozambique the following June. In both countries there had been only one guerrilla movement, which inherited power in a smooth transition. Angola, however, had three guerrilla movements: the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). They had fought each other as bitterly as they had the Portuguese. The MPLA leaders espoused an eclectic interpretation of Marxism-Leninism that was, Yugoslav officials noted, “adapted to the specific conditions and needs of Angola.” The FNLA and UNITA were anti-communist but led by corrupt and unprincipled men. Even American officials acknowledged that the MPLA “stood head and shoulders above the other two groups.”

The new Portuguese government and the three Angolan movements agreed that a transitional government would rule until independence on November 11, 1975. Civil war erupted, however, in the spring of 1975. The following July, both South Africa and the United States began providing the FNLA and UNITA with weapons and military instructors to crush the MPLA. South Africa was motivated by the need to shore up apartheid at home and to eliminate any threat to its illegal rule over Namibia, the sprawling country sandwiched between Angola and South Africa. South African officials feared the MPLA’s implacable hostility to apartheid and its promise to assist the liberation movements of southern Africa. (By contrast, UNITA and the FNLA offered Pretoria their friendship.)

In the United States, senior officials—from the departments of State, Defense and the Treasury—advised against a covert operation. An MPLA victory, they argued, would not threaten US interests. But one man disagreed: Henry Kissinger. And Kissinger ruled the roost. He served as both national security advisor and secretary of state. President Ford, who

knew very little about foreign policy and nothing about Angola, deferred to Kissinger.

Why would Kissinger plan a covert operation in Angola, against the advice of his aides? It was not to counter the Kremlin: the Soviets were behaving with great restraint in Angola. They distrusted the MPLA leaders and did not want to jeopardize the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) negotiations with the United States; therefore, they had sent very little aid to the MPLA. Nor did Kissinger argue that American economic interests in Angola were threatened.

What impelled him to act was Vietnam. In April of that year, the South Vietnamese regime had collapsed. For Kissinger this debacle was both a national and personal humiliation. It undermined his standing at home and it made America look weak abroad. A display of resolve in Angola would exorcize the ghost of Vietnam, and the installation of a client regime in Luanda would provide a cheap boost to American prestige and to his own reputation.

By September, however, it was evident that the MPLA was winning the civil war, despite the arms and instructors that Washington and Pretoria had supplied to the FNLA and UNITA. It was winning not because of Cuban aid (no Cubans were yet fighting in Angola) or superior weapons, but because, as the CIA station chief in Luanda noted, the MPLA was “more effective, better educated, better trained, and better motivated.”

Washington urged Pretoria to send troops, and on October 14, a South African armored column invaded Angola. As the column raced toward Luanda, MPLA resistance crumbled. The MPLA turned to Cuba, asking for troops. The South Africans would have seized the capital had Fidel Castro not decided on November 4 to respond favorably to the MPLA’s appeals. The Cuban forces, despite their initial inferiority in numbers and weapons, halted the South African onslaught. The official South African historian of the war wrote, “the Cubans rarely surrendered and, quite simply, fought cheerfully until death.”

Neither Kissinger nor his aides had imagined that the Cubans might intervene, and, as Reagan pointed out, they botched their response. Kissinger tried to enlist the help of the French and the Chinese, to no avail. He ordered the CIA to raise an army of mercenaries, but the few men the agency gathered were cut to pieces by the Cubans as soon as they reached

Angola. There was only one practical response: “We should assign a major role to South Africa in restoring freedom in Angola,” Senator Jesse Helms urged. Ford and Kissinger would have been happy to oblige, but Pretoria demanded that Washington openly endorse its invasion and pledge military assistance if the Soviet bloc escalated. For Ford, facing a presidential election in 1976, this was politically impossible.

As the South African operation unraveled and credible evidence surfaced in the Western press that Washington and Pretoria had colluded in Angola, the White House drew back. It claimed ignorance and condemned the South African intervention. This outraged South Africa’s defense minister, who told parliament:

> I know of only one occasion in recent years when we crossed a border and that was in the case of Angola when we did so with the approval and knowledge of the Americans. But they left us in the lurch. We are going to retell the story: the story must be told of how we, with their knowledge, went in there and operated in Angola with their knowledge, how they encouraged us to act and, when we had nearly reached the climax, we were ruthlessly left in the lurch.

By April 1976 the Cuban troops had pushed the South Africans back into Namibia, whence they had come. US officials responded to the humiliating defeat with fury. They blasted the Cubans as Moscow’s mercenaries.

Perhaps some believed it. The image of Castro as Moscow’s proxy was comforting: it cast Cuba’s extraordinary internationalism in a squalid light. As former under secretary of state George Ball observed, “Myths are made to solace those who find reality distasteful and, if some find such fantasy comforting, so be it.”

With the passing of time, however, the evidence that the Cubans sent their troops to Angola on their own initiative and without consulting the Soviets has become too compelling to deny. In 1981, the CIA noted that the intervention “was a unilateral Cuban operation designed in great haste.” Even Kissinger was forced to reconsider—Castro had confronted the Soviets with a fait accompli, he admitted in his memoirs. Castro had sent his soldiers because of his commitment to what he called “the most beautiful cause,” the struggle against apartheid. He understood that the victory of the Pretoria-Washington axis would have tightened the grip of white domination over the people of southern Africa. Kissinger acknowledged that Castro “was probably the most genuine revolutionary leader then in power.”

The tidal wave unleashed by the Cuban victory washed over southern Africa. Two statements from across the political divide in apartheid South Africa illustrate its psychological impact and the hope it aroused. In February 1976, as Cuban troops were pushing Pretoria's army out of Angola, a South African military analyst wrote:

> In Angola, Black troops—Cubans and Angolans—have defeated White troops in military exchanges … and that psychological edge, that advantage the White man has enjoyed and exploited over 300 years of colonialism and empire, is slipping away. White elitism has suffered an irreversible blow in Angola, and Whites who have been there know it.

The "white giants" had retreated and black Africans celebrated. "Black Africa is riding the crest of a wave generated by the Cuban success in Angola," noted the *World*, South Africa's major black newspaper. "Black Africa is tasting the heady wine of the possibility of realizing the dream of total liberation."

Kissinger's foolhardy adventure brought thousands of Cuban soldiers to Angola, where they remained until 1991. They protected the Angolan government from South African attacks and trained Namibian and South African freedom fighters. In 1988, they gained the upper hand over the South African army and forced Pretoria to allow free elections in Namibia.

In the words of Nelson Mandela, the Cuban victory

> destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the white oppressor … [and] inspired the fighting masses of South Africa … [It] was the turning point for the liberation of our continent—and of my people—from the scourge of apartheid … What other country can point to a record of greater selflessness than Cuba has displayed in its relations to Africa?

7

Kissinger in South Africa

Gerald Horne

Henry Kissinger almost drowned.

It was 1976. Scrambling to avoid being overtaken by events in the wake of Cuba's earth-shattering intervention in Angola, he had decamped to southern Africa, where his immediate goal was to assess whether the illegal white minority regime in Rhodesia might endure. (Rhodesia, fearing that London was beginning to favor African majority rule in the colony, had recently issued its "Unilateral Declaration of Independence," or UDI.) However, he had taken a tourist detour to the natural wonder European colonizers had earlier termed Victoria Falls—twice the height of its cousin, Niagara Falls. There, his overloaded boat almost capsized.

Kissinger and his navigator were able to right themselves in the nick of time. But US policy in the war-torn region seemed perpetually on the verge of capsizing, particularly when the Rhodesian minority regime was overthrown and replaced by the independent Zimbabwean government in 1980. Later, in 1994, Washington's client in neighboring apartheid South Africa was finally dislodged in that nation's first democratic election, which led to the swearing into office of President Nelson Mandela.

Still, that perilous journey to what became the border of Zambia and Zimbabwe did more than just potentially jeopardize the life of the US secretary of state. His unsuccessful negotiations with the Rhodesian regime also inflamed the base of the Republican Party in the United States, whose

white supporters sympathized with their racial brethren under the flinty leadership of the Rhodesian prime minister, Ian Smith.

As Kissinger was gallivanting in southern Africa, President Gerald Ford was facing a challenge from former California governor Ronald Reagan in the GOP primaries. Reagan and his supporters charged that Kissinger and Ford were selling out the interests of the European minority in Salisbury and Pretoria. The white settlers of southern Africa, these critics of Washington's policy charged, were, like themselves, the embodiment of "law and order" in the face of stiff and unruly challenges from rambunctious Negroes, be they in Harlem or in the city that would soon be Harare.

When Ford lost a critical GOP primary in May 1976, the supposed reason was Kissinger's abandonment of the European minority population in southern Africa. James A. Baker III, a future secretary of state himself, was among those who demanded Kissinger's resignation in response to the diplomat's presumed malfeasance in the region. In the immediate aftermath of this setback, Kissinger was bewildered when he received, via correspondence, no fewer than 1,700 negative appraisals of his African handiwork, and a mere twenty-three messages backing African majority rule.

However, these critics had not followed events carefully. The eradication of fascist rule in Portugal in 1974 was followed seriatim by the liberation of Lisbon's colony in Mozambique; likewise, the compelled decolonization of its sister colony in Angola, with a Cuban military force acting as skilled midwife, came soon after. These developments tightened the noose now encircling these nations' besieged neighbors in Rhodesia and South Africa, while reducing Kissinger's leverage. Kissinger was not engaging in puffery when he suggested that these Copernican changes in Portugal and southern Africa "revolutionized the geopolitical context."

With the liberation of the former Portuguese colonies, the forces fighting for majority rule had a rear base: Mozambique served as a point from which to launch attacks inside South Africa, while Angola served as a site from which guerillas could be trained under the expert tutelage of Cuban instructors. Portugal was a key ally of the United States in NATO, and providing basing rights for Washington in the Azores was deemed strategic. This had hampered Washington's ability to adjust to the new era of African majority rule, but now it seemed that failure to adjust could

mean advances for a major geopolitical adversary: Cuba, Moscow's ally in the Caribbean.

This placed Kissinger in a real bind. The Africans fighting minority rule—even today's sainted Nelson Mandela—were then perceived as little more than Cuban and Soviet proxies. Thus, the secretary of state had to cede ground to those seen widely in the GOP as little more than communist dupes, while simultaneously inducing Salisbury to do the same. Unsurprisingly, this pushed the ordinarily duplicitous Kissinger into stances that were stunning, even by his unprincipled standard.

The largest bloc of votes in the United Nations was comprised of African nations, many of which were still smarting from decades—if not centuries—of colonial rule by Washington's closest European allies. The events of 1974–75 in Portugal and its erstwhile colonies impelled independent Africa to step up its support for anti-regime forces in Rhodesia. In the Cold War context, these anti-colonial victories were seen in Washington as victories for the Soviet Union. This was bound to redound to Kissinger's detriment, as this all occurred on his watch—which his ultra-right detractors did not see as coincidental.

Kissinger did not help his case with the GOP base when he pledged "unrelenting opposition" to minority rule. "American travelers will be advised against entering Rhodesia," he declared. "American residents will be urged to leave." The response to his remarks was unbridled anger. After all, there were a mere few hundred thousand Europeans in Rhodesia, surrounded by millions of Africans, and as a direct result Euro-Americans had been flooding into this erstwhile colony since the UDI in 1965, not only as tourists but also as mercenaries and investors.

Thus, as Gerald Ford put it his memoirs, Republican conservatives "hit the ceiling" when they heard Kissinger's remarks. In retrospect, however, these comments should not have been taken so seriously (and indeed they weren't by savvy African leaders), since US mercenaries fighting rifle-in-hand in southern Africa seemed to have little difficulty traveling to Rhodesia and went curiously unprosecuted upon returning home, while US oil giants continued to "smuggle" their valuable commodity into the beleaguered colony with little fear of retribution from Washington.

Unconvinced, a resolution was unanimously adopted by the Republican National Committee Heritage Groups Council that echoed Baker's demarche by demanding Kissinger's immediate ouster. Saltier critics said

Kissinger was either a “traitor” or a “communist.” These obdurate detractors were also displeased when Kissinger, in a failed attempt to assuage African Americans’ growing opposition to US policy in Africa, initiated a series of “emotional” meetings with this group, whose foreign policy interests had been routinely ignored; this was the “first time,” he said, that they “had [been] systematically consulted by a Secretary of State.” John Reinhardt, an African American, was even added to Kissinger’s negotiating team in South Africa. But the situation there had soared beyond cosmetic reforms, no matter how ill-intentioned.

Reagan took advantage of the contretemps, and his success in the polls raised the specter of a sitting president not receiving his party’s nomination. Kissinger considered resignation. But then Reagan stumbled when he seemed to indicate that he would send US troops to Rhodesia, causing even some hard-line conservatives to blanch, given the recently concluded disaster in Vietnam.

Kissinger’s right-wing opponents did not accept the point that events in Portugal, Angola and Mozambique had changed the “geopolitical context” fundamentally, necessitating the unscrupulous wiliness that was the hallmark of the secretary of state’s tenure—winking at the arrival in Rhodesia of mercenaries and investors alike while mouthing anodyne words that appeared to oppose minority rule. Then, in June 1976, the South African township of Soweto exploded in protests. In the resultant tumult, youth began flooding into neighboring Mozambique and Angola, where they received military and political training—from Cuban comrades. This had a ripple effect in the Pretoria colony of Namibia—larger in size than California and Texas combined—and pushed that nation closer to independence from South Africa, which was to emerge finally in 1990.

Beyond the perception that the liberation of southern Africa represented a Cold War setback, there were other reasons that Kissinger scrambled to shore up a losing cause in Rhodesia. When Prime Minister Smith met the secretary of state and his spouse, the Rhodesian leader, in an attempt at camaraderie, once said of Mrs. Kissinger, “Like me [she] was conservative by nature, had Scottish blood through ancestry and believed that we had much in common.” Smith himself had an uncle who was “well established in the United States” and eventually resided in southern California. Then-president Lyndon Johnson was “very interested” in the Baines School in Bulawayo—the second city of the colony—and wondered if it was part of a

familial relationship. He could trace the Baines branch of his family back to 1741 and wondered if he had relatives in Rhodesia.

This would not have been unusual. From the beginning of this British colony in the 1890s, Euro-Americans had been prominent in Rhodesia and, like the mercenaries that Kissinger pretended not to notice, had been instrumental in the war against Africans. But, at long last, despite the herculean efforts of white settler governments to preserve their power, majority rule came to the region—and in the fall of 1976, Ford was defeated by Jimmy Carter. Carter, aware of his electoral debt to African Americans, appointed civil rights leader Andrew Young to be his ambassador to the United Nations.

However, Reagan and his relentless supporters simply reloaded. They defeated Carter in 1980, with Zimbabwean independence that spring held against the Democratic incumbent from Georgia. By that point, Kissinger was well on his way to cashing in on his diplomatic tour of duty, having formed a business consultancy that would translate his foreign policy knowledge into a minor personal fortune.

8

Kissinger in Western Sahara

Aubrey Bloomfield

Western Sahara, situated in northwest Africa and occupied by Morocco since 1975, is by far the largest of the seventeen non-self-governing territories listed by the UN in which the decolonization process has yet to be completed. Yet, of all the foreign policy issues covered in this volume, the role of the United States in Morocco's annexation of Western Sahara is likely one of the lesser known. Indeed, the occupation there has long suffered from a general lack of international attention.

Previously known as Spanish Sahara, Western Sahara borders Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania and the Atlantic Ocean. Since the late twentieth century, the overwhelming majority of the territory has been under Moroccan occupation. The Polisario Front, the independence movement of the indigenous Saharawi people, controls the remainder in the form of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). The two areas are separated by a 2,700-kilometer-long sand wall surrounded by an estimated 9 million land mines. For decades, American engagement in the conflict has been consistent, helping first to shape this situation and then to maintain it.

Under pressure from Morocco, the UN and a growing independence movement, Spain ceded control of the territory it had held since 1884. The United States attempted to portray itself as neutral in the October–November 1975 crisis in which Morocco (backed by France), Mauritania

and the Polisario (backed by Algeria) competed for control of Western Sahara in the face of the impending Spanish withdrawal.

Kissinger, as US secretary of state, maintained in a meeting with Algerian foreign minister Abdelaziz Bouteflika (later to become Algeria's president) that the United States did not favor a particular side and had tried to stay out of the territorial dispute.[1] However, the United States actually adopted an explicitly pro-Moroccan stance that has had significant consequences that continue to reverberate to this day.

As the Saharawi people were hoping to get rid of their colonial ruler and gain independence, the United States was helping to install Morocco as the new colonial power.

Strategic Interests

Despite repeated promises of a referendum on self-determination, the Saharawi have still not been able to exercise this right. Morocco and Mauritania, which both claimed precolonial sovereignty over the territory, invaded after the signing of an agreement on November 14, 1975, in which Spain handed control to Morocco and Mauritania, reneging on its previous promise to hold a referendum.

A bitter war, in which the Polisario was able to drive out Mauritanian forces (Mauritania withdrew its claim to the territory in 1979) but not the Moroccans, ended in a UN-brokered ceasefire in 1991. Since then, no substantive progress has been made in resolving the conflict, despite periodic attempts to find a solution. Instead, the Moroccan occupation has grown more entrenched, with the Saharawi continuing to face ongoing human rights violations, exile and the denial of their right to self-determination.

In a sense it is correct to describe the US stance as officially neutral given that it neither recognizes Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara (no state officially does), nor does it recognize the SADR's claim (around eighty states have recognized it at various times, and both the SADR and Morocco are members of the African Union). But this is misleading. The characterization of the US role as neutral was only really plausible prior to the start of the twenty-first century. And even in the few years following the

1975 crisis, comments from various Algerian, Spanish and US officials already pointed to a more active but covert US role in support of Morocco.

The subsequent declassification of US government records from the late 1970s and documents obtained under the United States Freedom of Information Act have shed light on internal US discussions as well as the country's dealings with other actors in the dispute. As Colgate University professor Jacob Mundy outlined in a 2006 article for the *Journal of North African Studies* titled "Neutrality of Complicity? The United States and the 1975 Moroccan Takeover of the Spanish Sahara," Kissinger and the Ford administration actively worked to support Morocco's efforts to take control of Western Sahara. Furthermore, Mundy notes that even in the few years following the 1975 crisis, comments from various Algerian, Spanish and US officials had already pointed to a more active but covert US role in support of Morocco.[2]

The strategic reasons for US (and French) support for Morocco's King Hassan II in the geopolitical context of the Cold War were obvious to observers even before the backroom role of the United States became better known. As British journalist Tony Hodges wrote in his 1983 book *Western Sahara: The Roots of a Desert War*, Hassan

> was a fervent anticommunist, a traditional ally of the NATO powers, ruling a country strategically located at the entrance to the Mediterranean. He had allowed the US to maintain military facilities on his territory, permitted French and other Western warships to call at his ports and tried over the years to moderate Arab hostility to Israel. Moreover, the US and French governments knew that the stability of his regime hinged, after the internal dissension and crises of the early seventies, on the success of his Saharan crusade.[3]

Morocco is one of the United States' oldest allies, and what is clear from Mundy's examination of the official record is the overwhelming desire of the United States not to jeopardize this relationship. The right to self-determination of the Saharawi people and the actual validity of Morocco's claim to Western Sahara mattered little to the United States and Kissinger. As Mundy notes, Kissinger consistently characterized the crisis to Ford in such a way—misrepresenting Algeria's reasons for supporting the Polisario, ignoring Saharawi rights and exaggerating the legitimacy of Morocco's claim—as to justify only one policy choice: support for Morocco.

According to Mundy, the United States was aware at least as early as the beginning of October 1975 that Morocco planned to invade Western Sahara in order to assert its claim over the territory. Kissinger cautioned

Morocco against taking any military action and urged Hassan to stick to diplomacy but stopped short of expressing stronger opposition to Morocco's plans. Indeed, Mundy argues that the "US government made a kind of 'promise' or 'guarantee' to Hassan that things would turn out in his favor."[4] While the exact details remain unclear given that some official US records from the time are still classified, this conclusion is certainly in keeping with the available evidence and America's pro-Moroccan policy.

A Scofflaw State

A number of significant developments took place in mid-October. The UN had mandated a mission to Western Sahara and the neighboring countries to investigate the political situation and competing claims to the territory. It had also referred the issue of Morocco's and Mauritania's claims to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a move that had previously been requested by Morocco following Spain's promise to hold a referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara.

In its October 15 report, the UN mission concluded: "the majority of the population within the Spanish Sahara was manifestly in favour of independence."[5] The following day, the ICJ issued its opinion. Although the court noted that some legal ties did exist between Morocco and Mauritania, respectively, and Western Sahara at the time of Spanish colonization, it maintained: "the materials and information presented to it do not establish any tie of territorial sovereignty between the territory of Western Sahara and the Kingdom of Morocco or the Mauritanian entity."[6] Furthermore, it concluded that nothing it found altered the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination.

Yet Morocco, with the backing of its Western allies, was able to ignore both of these developments. This is part of an ongoing dynamic in which the support of key Western states and broader international indifference continues to enable Morocco to ignore international norms regarding decolonization and self-determination.

Despite the unequivocal decision against Morocco's and Mauritania's claims, only hours later Hassan publicly stated that the ICJ had found that Western Sahara was a part of Moroccan territory. Hassan further announced that he would lead 350,000 Moroccan civilians on a peaceful "Green

March” into Western Sahara to seize the territory from Spain. According to Mundy, Kissinger supported Hassan’s misinterpretation of the ICJ opinion, telling Ford in an October 17 meeting that the court “said sovereignty had been decided between Morocco and Mauritania. That basically is what Hassan wanted.”[7]

It is unclear from the available records if Kissinger deliberately misrepresented the ICJ opinion to Ford or just misinterpreted it. Either way, given the broader dynamic of the United States–Morocco relationship, even if Kissinger had accurately characterized the ICJ opinion to Ford, it seems unlikely to have made much difference to US policy.

It was clear that Hassan was set on taking Western Sahara regardless of what the ICJ had found and that the United States was not going to stand in its way. In the midst of ongoing diplomatic efforts to broker a peaceful solution, Kissinger said in a November 3 meeting with Ford that while the United States likely had the power and influence to alter the trajectory of the dispute if it chose to directly confront Morocco, it did not want to face the backlash. Instead, the United States wanted the UN to become more involved, with Kissinger later saying that the dispute should be turned “over to the UN with a guarantee it [Western Sahara] will go to Morocco.”[8]

While Spain publicly opposed the Green March, and toothless UN Security Council resolutions (watered down thanks to the United States and France) criticized it, Morocco ignored everyone and went ahead on November 6. Spain offered no resistance. While the march was a largely symbolic affair, it was nevertheless a clear demonstration of Morocco’s intent, and for the Saharawi it represented the illegal invasion and occupation of their homeland. Less than a week after Hassan called the marchers back on November 9, Spain signed the Madrid agreement ceding control to Morocco and Mauritania.

The events of October and November 1975 paved the way for Morocco’s eventual annexation of the majority of Western Sahara. However, US support for Morocco while Kissinger was in office was by no means an aberration. Following Spain’s eventual withdrawal in February 1976, the Polisario’s resistance to Moroccan and Mauritanian forces proved tougher than expected. With the military tide turning, a dramatic increase in US military aid from the Reagan administration (which had already increased under President Carter) was crucial to allowing Morocco to fight

its way to an eventual stalemate and the ceasefire in 1991, leaving it in control of the majority of the territory.[9]

Little has changed since then. Around 100,000 Saharawis, those who fled the war and their descendants, are still stuck in refugee camps in southern Algeria, with a smaller diaspora living in countries like Mauritania and Spain. The referendum on self-determination promised under the auspices of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has yet to take place. Had Kissinger and the United States actively opposed Morocco's territorial claim, or even merely adopted a neutral stance, things may have turned out very differently.

Decades after helping to enable Morocco's annexation and occupation of Western Sahara, the geopolitical context has shifted but the dynamic underlying US support remains the same. The Cold War has been replaced by the War on Terror, and the United States continues to view Morocco as a moderate ally whose stability should not be jeopardized by seriously entertaining the prospect of an independent Western Sahara. For many, Morocco is likely seen as either a bulwark against a vague terrorist threat or an attractive tourist destination, but not as an occupying power.

Since the 1991 ceasefire, and particularly in the past decade, international media and policymakers have tended to ignore the Saharawis' ongoing struggle for self-determination, affording it only brief bursts of attention. Given his vast destructive foreign policy legacy, it is unlikely Kissinger lost any sleep over the role he and the United States played in Western Sahara. But while he may not have dwelled on it, and Western Sahara is often labeled a "forgotten" issue, the Saharawi people do not have the luxury of forgetting.

9

Kissinger in the Gulf

Chip Gibbons

Henry Kissinger is certainly not the only architect of the American empire with blood on his hands, but he may be the only one to have worn that blood so proudly. Few leaders in this day and age still think of world affairs as a game of Risk, describing other countries as spaces on a board to be occupied by plastic game pieces. Yet Kissinger was willing to justify US human rights abuses by appealing to the value of "strategic real estate," as he did to justify US support for the shah's brutal regime in Iran.[1]

It seems evidence for Kissinger's villainy rested, in part, on his own tongue.

He once told a horrified Congressional committee that "covert action should not be confused with missionary work." (He was also known to use a variation of that phrase: "one should not confuse undercover action with social work.")[2] By the time Kissinger said these words in the late 1960s, the CIA's pattern of using covert action to overthrow democratically elected governments, back authoritarian regimes and provide cover for massacres and genocides had come under popular scrutiny. With mass movements against the war in Vietnam tying domestic racism and repression to American imperialism, the CIA was for the first time put on the defensive, and elected officials had to at least feign concern.

In 1975, Congress established the Church Committee in the Senate and the Pike Committee in the House of Representatives to investigate just what

the CIA, NSA, FBI and other security-state apparatuses had been up to. While more people know the Church Committee's history, the Pike Committee has its own interesting backstory. Unlike its Senate counterpart, its final report was never formally released, as official channels made sure it stayed classified.

Still, what is done in the dark shall be brought to the light—someone leaked Kissinger's closed-door testimony to the press. The *Village Voice* published excerpts as "The CIA Report the President Doesn't Want You to Read," and, in 1977, a British publisher brought out the entire report with no redacted sections. The United States government won't release it to this day, but a copy of the British version is listed in the Library of Congress catalog.

Considering the revelations contained in the document, this level of secrecy isn't surprising. Through the Pike Committee report, the world first learned of Kissinger's betrayal of Iraq's Kurdish population.

A Cynical Operation

The Pike Report described Kissinger's mission in the Gulf as a uniquely "cynical operation," a turn of phrase that prompted him to remind the horrified legislators that he was not a social worker.[3] What had Kissinger done?

Ever since the British drew the borders of the modern Middle East at the end of World War I, Kurds have pursued a variety of strategies to win an independent state, including armed struggle. By the 1970s, the shah of Iran had begun arming and training Iraq's Kurds to support them in their rebellion against the Iraqi government. Kissinger, fearing that Iraq was orbiting too closely to the Soviet Union, decided to join his stalwart ally and throw his support behind the Kurds. At his behest, the CIA and Israel began colluding with the shah to further grow the Kurdish resistance.

The Pike Committee noted the covert action took place in a "setting of almost unprecedented secrecy within the US government," which it believed was intended to keep the State Department—which had opposed such measures in the past—from learning of it.[4] To create plausible deniability, the United States and Israel supplied the Kurds only with captured Soviet arms. The founder of the Kurdistan Democratic Party,

Mustafa Barzani, had no faith in the shah and recognized that his people were being used as pawns in Iran's ambitions against Iraq. Yet he had full faith in the United States: "America is too great a power to betray a small people like the Kurds," he said.[5]

But, according to the Pike Committee, "Dr. Kissinger and the foreign head of state [the Shah] hoped our clients [Barzani] would not prevail…" Although Kissinger encouraged hostilities, the US government would at one point restrain the Kurds from an all-out offensive they feared would have succeeded.[6] A Kurdish victory in Iraq would have had intolerable effects on American interests. Kissinger only wanted to arm the Kurds enough to menace the Iraqi government, not enough that they would achieve any real success. So when the United States and Iran warmed to Iraq, they had no qualms about abandoning the Kurds.

In 1975, after two years of diplomatic negotiations, Iraq and Iran signed the Algiers Agreement. The treaty ostensibly resolved a long-standing border dispute, but Iraq hoped it would also end the shah's support for the Kurdish rebels. Iraq got its wish: the borders were defined, and Iranian aid ceased. Kissinger claimed to have been shocked by the shah's participation in the Algiers Agreement. The Israeli government told him that Iran had not only betrayed the Kurds, but Israel as well.[7]

Yet, despite their shared astonishment, the United States and Israel also cut off aid to the Kurds shortly after the agreement was signed. The Kurdish resistance had fulfilled its purpose and brought Iraq to the bargaining table. Still, Kurdish leaders frantically tried to contact the CIA, Kissinger and even President Ford to remind them of their moral obligation and warn them of their decisions' dire consequences. But they received no response.

The Iranian military went home, the United States and Israel cut off the weapons supply and soon the Iraqi army squashed the rebellion. The results were devastating—according to the Pike Committee's findings, without the United States' decision to prop up the Kurdish rebellion the Kurds most likely would have reached an agreement with Iraq, "thus gaining at least a measure of autonomy while avoiding further bloodshed. Instead, our clients fought on, sustaining thousands of casualties and 200,000 refugees…"[8] The "cynicism of the US" not having "completely run its course," the United States then refused to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees it had helped create.[9]

During a 1975 meeting, Kissinger and his advisors concluded that, thanks to the resolution of the "Kurdish thing," Iraq was improving relations with its neighbors. Later that same year, he met with a high-level Iraqi official to discuss normalizing relations and admitted that Washington had armed the Kurds to keep Iraq from getting too close to the Soviet Union.[10] Kissinger's team was eager to establish a relationship with Saddam Hussein. Through Kissinger's meddling, Iraq spun back into the United States' global orbit and gradually improved relations with Western regimes.

Fifty-Seven Years of Intervention

The Kissinger-Kurdish affair may have been a particularly cynical enterprise, but it fits the pattern the United States established over fifty-seven years of intervention in Iraq; American officials have often armed resistance fighters one year, only to support the Iraqi government when it massacres them a few years later.[11]

After the United Kingdom created the modern state of Iraq, they installed a puppet monarch to maintain Western (that is, British) access to Iraqi oil. In 1958, however, a coup displaced the monarchy, and Abd al-Karim Qasim came to power. He declared Iraq neutral in the Cold War, withdrawing from an anti-communist military alliance that included Iran and kicking British military bases out of the country. This development upset CIA chief Allen Dulles, who warned Dwight Eisenhower that the coup could set off a domino effect and remove the Americans' preferred regimes across the entire Middle East. Fearing the spread of anti-Western sentiment, Eisenhower intervened in Lebanon that same year.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi Communist Party had grown into a mass party whose appeal cut across sectarian lines.[12] Dulles warned Congress that the Communists would soon completely run Iraq, making it the most dangerous country in the world. In a scene repeated throughout American history, the United States declared Iraq a unique and pressing danger and began plotting regime change. A year later, Washington almost got its wish—the violently anti-communist Ba'ath Party attempted to assassinate Qasim. But the plot was badly bungled, and, though his driver was murdered, Qasim was only wounded.

The extent of CIA involvement in the assassination plot remains unclear. We know that the agency backed the Ba'athists, and there are serious indications that it also provided training, even going so far as to pay the rent of one particularly promising member of the assassin's party—Saddam Hussein. In the aftermath, the CIA continued to train the Ba'ath party, including Hussein. And in 1961, the United States, along with Iran, once again supported the Kurds against the central Iraqi government.

These machinations finally paid off in 1963, when a joint military-Ba'athist coup successfully ousted Qasim and began exterminating the Communists. The CIA helped by providing the new government with suspected party members' names. Hussein participated by torturing—in famously brutal fashion —members of the working class believed to be Communists. In addition to encouraging the military-Baathist regime's most violent impulses, Washington responded to their request for help against the Kurds. The Iraqi government used American-supplied napalm on the very people who had received US support just two years earlier. This happened a full decade before Kissinger reminded us that covert action isn't missionary work—yet it reveals an identical perspective.

But the American success was short-lived—it didn't take long for the new regime's non-Ba'athist elements to purge their Ba'athist comrades. While the regime had originally renounced Qasim's nationalist oil policies, the new government now decided to continue them. From the United States' perspective, this would not do. It continued to support the Ba'ath Party, which had promised, should it come to power, to grant oil concessions to American corporations.

In 1968, the CIA and their British allies backed a successful Ba'athist coup. Hussein would not officially become president for another decade, but he carried out a bloody program of repressive measures and eventually became the country's de facto leader. As his power grew, he moved away from his former allies, asserting Iraqi control over its oil and nationalizing the petroleum industry. He also developed closer Soviet relations and let Communist Party members into government.

These events spawned Kissinger's cynical enterprise and the eventual slaughter of the Kurds. Hussein then oversaw the execution of Communists; the once-strong Iraqi Communist Party, which had gambled by joining Hussein's government, would become irrelevant. At this point, the remainder of the story is quite well known.

The shah of Iran, once the United States' top regional ally and Kissinger's preferred partner in the Middle East, was deposed in the 1979 revolution. The United States supported Hussein in the ensuing war, sending chemical weapons that he used against both the Iranians and the Kurdish rebel groups they backed. But when Hussein invaded Kuwait—possibly with what he thought was a green light from American diplomat April Glaspie—he once again became an enemy. The Bush, Clinton and Bush administrations would, like the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations before them, pursue regime change in Iraq.[13]

In yet another cynical enterprise, Washington used Hussein's chemical weapon attacks on the Kurds—which American support made possible—to justify its intervention. Hussein began his career as a CIA asset, but he died in a thinly veiled political assassination carried out by a kangaroo court convened by the American-controlled government in Iraq. This is not meant to describe Hussein as a martyr—he was a ruthless tyrant guilty of any number of crimes against humanity. But in many ways, he was a monster of American foreign policy's own making. And once he had fulfilled his purpose, the same imperial force that had cleared his path to power in the first place simply disposed of him.

Good for Business

Jimmy Carter best summed up American policy in the Middle East during his 1980 State of the Union speech. He warned that Soviet intervention in Afghanistan posed "a grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil" and that any

> attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.[14]

The definition of an "outside power," of course, does not include the United States' 2003 invasion, nor does it include the multiple British interventions in Iraq to assure its control of Iraq's oil. It does, however, include governments who nationalize foreign holdings.

What Carter really meant was that the region's oil must make it to the global market. While the United States acts in the interest of its own corporations, its special role as shepherd of global capitalism means it also

works to ensure the system functions as a whole, even when domestic corporations are not the immediate beneficiaries. This explains both why the United States took action in the 1950s in response to threats on British oil holdings and why, in 2011, the State Department desired for Iraq to boost production.[15] As Alan Greenspan explained, removing Saddam Hussein was essential —to world oil supplies.[16]

Iraq not only provides oil to the world economy; for a long time, it was also a major weapons consumer. When Qasim came to power fifty years ago, the British were troubled both by the threat he may have posed to foreign control of Iraq's oil and his decision to buy Soviet—as opposed to British—arms. When Iraq grew closer to the West, arms dealers—especially French, British, Italian and Brazilian manufacturers—rapidly embraced the country. And when US-Iraq relations were repaired in the 1980s, Iraq would again become a major purchaser of American-made arms. Iraq has remained among the top ten buyers of US weapons well into the twenty-first century.[17]

It isn't just arms and oil, though; keeping Iraq open to global capital is generally good for business. After the 1963 coup, the Kennedy administration promoted American business interests, and US corporations quickly moved into the country. Hussein's aggressive modernization opened the doors to American companies further. And, of course, international corporations profited massively during the US occupation, which saw the country importing cement while state-owned factories—dubbed inefficient by the American regime—sat idle.[18]

Kissinger's role in the latter part of this saga is minor but worth noting. When Hussein invaded Kuwait, many American conservatives opposed military action. This included paleo-conservatives like Pat Buchanan and Jeane Kirkpatrick, widely considered responsible for the neoconservative movement. Kissinger, however, made numerous public appearances to shore up conservative support for American intervention.[19] He went on to become a fervent proponent of regime change in Iraq and backed the 2003 invasion. In 2007, he argued against withdrawal while simultaneously cautioning that, while Iran may have "legitimate national interests," "industrial nations cannot accept radical forces dominating a region on which their economies depend."[20] Iraq, like Iran, was strategic real estate.

Thus, Kissinger had come full circle—supporting the Kurds against the Ba'athist government, viewing Hussein as a key asset and then calling for his ouster. This cynicism doesn't belong to Kissinger alone, no matter how macabre a figure he may have been. It is the defining characteristic of US-Iraq policy. The United States is, like Kissinger was, in the business of real estate, not social work—and real estate, much like empire, is suited only to thugs and tyrants.

Asia

10

Kissinger in East Pakistan/Bangladesh

Mukhtar Mirjan

When war erupted in South Asia in 1971, President Nixon and his national security advisor expressed their displeasure with the way the Indian government was acting. While discussing the war with Kissinger one day, the president fumed, “The Indians need … what they really need is a—” Kissinger chimed in: “They’re such bastards.” But the president was not done speaking. He completed his thought: “What they really need is a mass famine.”[1]

President Nixon seemed to dislike India. He once said, “I don’t know why the hell anybody would reproduce in that damn country but they do.”[2] But on this occasion he had a special reason to be resentful toward the country—India was supporting the nationalists in East Pakistan, who were fighting for their independence against West Pakistan, a US ally. Ultimately, the war would lead to the birth of a new sovereign state, Bangladesh, an outcome Nixon and Kissinger tried to prevent. The conflict had other consequences as well. While independent researchers have estimated that between 300,000 and 500,000 were killed in East Pakistan, Bangladesh officially claims that West Pakistan’s military and East Pakistan’s local militia killed about three million people and raped 200,000 women.[3] Additionally, some 10 million refugees fled the conflict in East Pakistan to go to India.[4]

Despite the loss of human lives, Kissinger ensured throughout the conflict that the United States supported West Pakistan's leadership in its mission to violently suppress the resistance.[5]

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Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority country with a population of over 160 million today, gained independence in 1971.[6] Prior to that, it had been part of Pakistan. When the British left India in 1947, Cyril John Radcliffe, a British lawyer, thought it best to assign two distant pieces of land to the future state of Pakistan. As a result, East Pakistan and West Pakistan were left disconnected, living in a spatially divided country that an Indian diplomat once fittingly called a "geographical monstrosity."[7] East and West Pakistan were divided along ethnic lines, as well, with the persecuted Bengali ethnic group representing the majority of East Pakistan's population.

The population of East Pakistan, about 75 million at the time, was higher than that of West Pakistan, which was about 61 million.[8] But by the late 1970s, it had become clear to the population of East Pakistan that the West wing of the country was not willing to allow it an equal share in governing—or in anything else.[9]

The last straw for the nationalists in East Pakistan was West Pakistani leaders' refusal to accept the results of the 1970 elections. In the elections, Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, leader of the East Pakistani nationalist Awami League (AL), won the majority. His party won all but two seats in East Pakistan.[10] The AL's victory shifted the balance of power, since East Pakistan already had more seats allocated to it due to its larger population. Rehman could now be prime minister of the entire country—or, at the very least, of an East Pakistani legislature.

The leaders of West Pakistan, however, refused to accept this result. This, along with years of ill treatment at the hands of these leaders, led many in East Pakistan to call for secession. Aided by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's government and military, East Pakistan seceded in 1971 with the support of a swelling Bengali nationalist movement.

Washington saw this conflict as an important event. Kissinger called it "perhaps the most complex issue of Nixon's first term."[11] Kissinger was

well informed about the atrocities being committed by his allies in West Pakistan.[12] In fact, on April 6, 1971, the US consulate in Dhaka cabled a telegram to Washington in which the diplomatic staff expressed "strong dissent" to US policy in Pakistan and accused the country of carrying out a genocide in East Pakistan.[13] The telegram expressed dismay over Washington's refusal to "denounce atrocities."[14] Kissinger, therefore, was fully aware of the violence for which he was advocating support.

During the conflict, the United States provided Pakistan with arms via Jordan and Iran. Kissinger and Nixon supported this policy despite being warned in legal briefs from both the State Department and the Pentagon that such actions were illegal.[15] Washington did not even ask the Pakistani military to refrain from using American weapons during the conflict.[16]

Kissinger was desperate to see West Pakistan emerge as the victor. On December 10, he decided to send in the US Navy. Kissinger delivered a presidential order to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff commanding that the US aircraft carrier *Enterprise* be relocated from Vietnam, where it was stationed at the time, to the Bay of Bengal. The *Enterprise* was to be accompanied by nine warships and 2,000 marines. This order was given without any consultation with the secretary of defense or the National Security Council. The task force was not even assigned a formal mission. The maneuver in the Bay of Bengal was pure posturing—Kissinger hoped to use this as a way to send Moscow a message.[17] He also wanted the Chinese government to think that the presence of the fleet meant that the United States would defend Chinese forces in case they decided to enter the war to protect West Pakistan. According to one historian, Kissinger wanted to create "precisely the margin of uncertainty needed to force a decision by New Delhi and Moscow."[18]

The civilian population of East Pakistan, and its supporters in India, could not help but see the presence of this fleet as an effort by the United States to sway the outcome of the war in favor of West Pakistan.[19] As a response, India carried out a bombing campaign targeting all West Pakistani ships in East Pakistani harbors in order to insure that West Pakistan's army could not evacuate to the American fleet offshore.[20]

In spite of this big loss for West Pakistan, Kissinger's task force emboldened Pakistan's leaders in their resolve to suppress the independence movement in East Pakistan. Pakistan's president, Yahya Khan, even hinted

to his colleagues that the American military would intervene. Kissinger had earlier urged him not to accept a ceasefire in East Pakistan, which would have prevented at least some casualties. Taking this, along with the presence of the *Enterprise* in the Bay of Bengal, as signs of a forthcoming US intervention, Khan extended the war by a few days.

Kissinger and Nixon also tried to sway the conflict by threatening India. On December 12, 1971, as Kissinger and Nixon discussed the developing conflict, the president said that India had to be hit "hard and tough." The Indians had to be "scared," said Kissinger. Somewhere in the midst of this discussion, Kissinger called Indira Gandhi "that bitch."[21] Building on these views toward India, President Nixon ordered Kissinger to threaten the Indians with the possibility of an end to American aid if they started a war with Pakistan. At that time, the United States gave India about $220 million every year, along with $220 million in loans and $65 million in food aid. Kissinger delivered this message to a Situation Room meeting. "The President has said so," said Kissinger. "In fact, he tells me every day."[22]

Kissinger believed that he was justified in backing West Pakistan's leadership. It seems he considered the political aspirations of the United States, in terms of its relations with China and Russia, to be more important than the lives of millions of people in East Pakistan—or perhaps anywhere in Asia. President Nixon apparently thought he had discerned what the nationalist unrest was about. "I know," he said, "the bigger game is the Russian game."[23]

Pakistan, Kissinger insisted, was the only channel to China. In July 1970, Kissinger had even secretly visited China via Pakistan. At that moment in time, there was little more important to Kissinger than maintaining a channel to China, and that meant maintaining his relationship with West Pakistan's leaders.[24]

Another justification Kissinger gave for supporting West Pakistan was the dubious nature of the Indian leadership's war objectives. Kissinger believed that Indira Gandhi's real intentions in the war were based on India's rivalry with Pakistan. He held the view that India wanted to cut up Pakistan and subsequently destroy West Pakistan as an independent state. His view was based on information coming from US intelligence officials. In fact, according to the director of central intelligence at the time, Gandhi

not only wanted to “eliminate” West Pakistan’s army and air force, but also intended to make gains in Kashmir. Debate remains regarding the role played by India’s rivalry with Pakistan in the conflict. Whatever Gandhi’s other intentions, India helped East Pakistan’s nationalists achieve independence.

Kissinger’s view regarding India’s intentions had further implications, as well. It led to assumptions about the Soviet Union, especially after the signing of the Soviet-Indian treaty on August 9, 1971. This treaty came right after it had been publicly announced that Kissinger had visited China and that the president planned to do so soon.[26] The developing Soviet-Indian relationship convinced Kissinger that if India wanted West Pakistan “destroyed,” then the Soviet Union wanted it too.[27] In fact, Kissinger believed that the Soviet Union had made an Indian attack on Pakistan possible. Years later, in his memoir, Kissinger wrote that the Soviet Union’s “aim” after the US-China reconciliation was to demonstrate to the world that both the United States and China were useless as allies. If, therefore, the United States was to remain passive in an Indian attack on Pakistan, Kissinger believed that Moscow would have gotten the “wrong signal.”[28]

Kissinger and Nixon ultimately did not look at the conflict in terms of the aspirations of the people of South Asia. Instead, they saw it as being about Russia and China—and themselves. Furthermore, despite having great leverage on the leaders of West Pakistan, Nixon and Kissinger failed to prevent the military crackdown in East Pakistan. And the two men really did have the power to influence West Pakistan’s leaders. When they had asked General Yahya Khan, in the midst of the unrest, to prevent Lieutenant General Tikka Khan, a West Pakistani military man, from governing East Pakistan, Yahya Khan promptly did so. Kissinger and Nixon also convinced Khan not to execute Mujib-ur-Rehman, future president of Bangladesh, when a wartime trial was held against him.[29] Kissinger’s calculations about the conflict cannot be dismissed as harmless observations. His calculations contributed to the violent suppression of East Pakistan.

Kissinger wrote in one of his many memoirs, “All my life I have reflected on the building of peace.”[30] His actions during the 1971 war in South Asia, however, show otherwise.

11

Kissinger in East Timor

Alex de Jong

In 1999, after almost a quarter century of Indonesian occupation, the small country of East Timor finally gained its independence. The 1975 Indonesian invasion and the occupation that followed—which has been described as "the clearest and most horrific instance of colonialism by a former colony"—took the lives of more than 200,000 East Timorese, about a third of the pre-invasion population. Indonesia's rule over East Timor had received crucial backing over the years from the United States, Australia and other Western powers. But Indonesia would have never succeeded in seizing the island nation in the first place without the diligent support of the United States. As secretary of state, Henry Kissinger helped make the occupation happen.

Portuguese sailors landed in Timor within years after their first passage through the Straits of Malacca in 1511. The Portuguese captured the eastern side of the island's 32,300-square-kilometer area, the rest eventually falling under Dutch control. Colonialism drew East Timor into a violent history shared with the other subjects of the Portuguese empire, and added one more tradition to the island's already variegated cultural mix. As independence leader José Ramos-Horta once put it, East Timor drew on influences that included Melanesian, "which binds us to our brothers and sisters of the South Pacific region; Malay-Polynesian, binding us to South-

East Asia; and the Latin Catholic influence, a legacy of almost five hundred years of Portuguese colonization."

When The Hague was forced to recognize Indonesian independence in 1949, the western half of Timor passed over to the administration of the Republic of Indonesia. East Timor, however, remained under control of the Salazar and Caetano dictatorships that would continue to rule Portugal for decades to come. The Portuguese had crushed the last military resistance against colonialism in the early twentieth century. Governor Affonso de Castro, the empire's chief administrator on the island from 1859 to 1863, once complained that "rebellion in Timor continues successively, leading us to conclude that revolt is a normal state and peace is exceptional."

East Timorese resistance was rekindled by the preemptive 1941 Australian-Dutch invasion of neutral Portuguese Timor and the successive Japanese occupation of 1942–45. Some 60,000 Timorese were killed in those years. After the war, the United States cooperated with Salazar's fascist Estado Novo to bring East Timor back under brutal Portuguese control. The colony remained abysmally underdeveloped, primarily producing agricultural products for export.

Acting "Illegally and Beautifully"

On May 5, 1974, in the immediate wake of the Carnation Revolution that overthrew fascism in Portugal, the new Portuguese government allowed for the establishment of political parties in East Timor. The long overdue decolonization process had begun. The two largest parties to emerge were the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT) and the more left-leaning Association of Timorese Social Democrats (ASDT). Timorese students returning from Portugal and its other colonies—many of whom had experience in Portuguese radical movements or communist independence movements, like FRELIMO in Mozambique—pushed ASDT further left. Within a few months, the party was renamed the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor, or FRETILIN. The following year, FRETILIN won elections organized by the Portuguese Decolonization Commission. In response, UDT mounted an unsuccessful coup, leading to a civil war that cost thousands of lives, and which FRETILIN won.

In 1974, the Indonesian government began to interfere in East Timor's independence process. Indonesia had been dominated since 1965 by the

military dictatorship of General Suharto, whose rule had been initiated by a paroxysm of violence against communists and their suspected allies that claimed at least half a million lives. The Suharto government broadcast propaganda into East Timor and infiltrated the UDT, trying to provoke a civil war that would give it an excuse to intervene. In September, the defeated UDT "asked" the Indonesian military for support. On October 16, five Australian journalists were killed, sending a clear message to the international media that nobody would be allowed to monitor the actions of Indonesian troops. In December 1975, nine days after the FRETILIN government declared independence, Indonesia invaded the capital of Dili, killing thousands of civilians.

The United States had been well aware of Indonesia's intentions. In September 1974, the CIA reported the incursion of hundreds of Indonesian troops into East Timor, and daily briefings kept the White House updated on Suharto's campaign. In early December, Kissinger received news from the State Department that the Indonesians planned to invade.

In fact, the Indonesian attack came only a few hours after Kissinger and President Ford left Jakarta, where they had met with Suharto. According to transcripts, Ford had told the general: "[We] will not press on the issue [of East Timor]. We understand … the intentions you have." Kissinger explained that "the use of US-made arms could create problems." About 90 percent of Indonesian military equipment at the time came from the United States, under the terms of a 1958 treaty. Indonesia assured the US that these weapons would be used "solely for legitimate national self-defense."

Kissinger also expressed his understanding of Indonesia's "need to move quickly." Thinking along with his hosts regarding the use of US weapons, he suggested, "it depends on how we construe it, whether it is self-defense or as a foreign operation." Regarding the actual attack, Kissinger remarked, "It would be better if it were done after we [Kissinger and Ford] returned," and concluded: "it is important that whatever you do succeeds quickly."

After the invasion, the US administration imposed a six-month delay on military aid to Jakarta, ostensibly to determine whether the government had indeed violated the terms under which the United States had delivered arms. Should Congress ask about arms deliveries, Kissinger told the State Department to reply that shipments had been cut off while they studied the

situation in East Timor. In fact, deliveries continued as planned, and the Indonesian government was never even aware a “ban” was in place.

After staff members had written a memo exploring the legal issues entailed by further arms deliveries to the Indonesians, Kissinger exploded. “It will go to Congress and then we’ll have hearings on it!” After learning there was another memo, he complained, “two cables! That means twenty guys have seen it … That will leak in three months and it will come out that Kissinger overruled his pristine bureaucrats and violated the law.”

But Kissinger’s fear turned out to be misplaced.

In July 1976, Indonesia annexed East Timor, recasting the conflict as an “internal affair” and ending any worries about restrictions on the use of US weapons. Later, during a State Department staff meeting, an assistant to Kissinger declared, “[the Indonesians] are quite happy with the position we’ve taken. We’ve resumed, as you know, all of our normal relations with them.” Kissinger commended his department for acting “illegally and beautifully.”

Suharto now expected only “a small guerrilla war” to follow his invasion. General Ali Murtopo, one of the most influential men in Indonesia’s New Order regime, anticipated “the whole business to be settled in three weeks.” But confronted with their much larger Indonesian opponent, the Timorese put up stiff resistance, using weapons taken from raided Portuguese armories. Thousands of Timorese evaded the invaders by moving into the mountains, where they provided support to the independence fighters.

The Indonesian army, more experienced in slaughtering civilians than fighting armed opponents, was never able to fully crush the East Timorese. By late 1977, the Indonesian army was running out of supplies. New deliveries of US weapons, including Bronco airplanes developed specifically for counter-insurgency operations, allowed the Indonesian army to launch a new offensive. To deprive the resistance fighters of support, the Indonesian army commenced an intensive bombing campaign, destroying infrastructure and croplands to starve the East Timorese into submission and force them to return to lowland areas under Indonesian control. After another four years of fighting, the East Timorese resistance was put down, but armed struggle would continue throughout the Indonesian occupation.

Sacked, Looted and Emptied

American foreign policy took some sharp hits in 1975. In April, the fall of Saigon cemented the United States' humiliating defeat in Vietnam. The State Department fared no better in the former Portuguese colonies. The same year, the leftist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola defeated its US-backed opponents and took power in Angola, while Mozambique became independent under FRELIMO rule.

After Vietnam, writes historian Greg Grandin, "Kissinger reinforced the White House's commitment to neighboring dictators, including Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and Suharto in Indonesia." Preparing Ford for their visit to Jakarta, Kissinger asserted in a secret memorandum that

> in the post-Vietnam environment, US Interests in Indonesia are based both on its present position in the region and, especially, on its anticipated future role … It is potentially one of the richest [countries in Southeast Asia]. Its geographic location and resources are of major strategic importance in the region.

An unnamed State Department official explained Washington's cooperation with Jakarta by saying, "We regard Indonesia as a friendly, non-aligned nation—a nation we do a lot of business with."

For the United States, relations with Suharto were more important than East Timor itself. The Suharto government had earned its anti-communist credentials with the pogroms of 1965 and had moved Indonesia firmly into the Western camp, restoring economic ties with capitalist powers and the IMF. For Indonesia, the invasion of East Timor was motivated by the arrogance of its rulers, who saw the half-island as part of the country they governed, and underwritten by pathological fear and hatred of communism. The US government and Suharto agreed they would not tolerate "a Cuba in Southeast Asia."

Successive US administrations continued to offer support for the Indonesian occupation. Carter's "human rights administration" doubled military assistance to Indonesia while trying to discredit reports of Indonesian atrocities in its fight "against the Marxist FRETILIN." In the UN, the United States voted against resolutions of the general assembly that supported East Timor's right to self-determination. Bill Clinton later recognized Suharto as his "kind of guy."

In the meantime, the East Timorese resistance evolved into a broad coalition that brought together FRETILIN and the UDT, along with many former collaborators. November 12, 1991, marked a turning point in their efforts. Indonesian troops, used to acting with impunity, opened fire on demonstrators in Dili under the eyes of international reporters. Hundreds were killed on the spot, and hundreds more in executions over the days that followed. General Try Sutrisno, who later became vice president under Suharto, openly declared that “these ill-bred people have to be shot and we will shoot them.”

Indonesian violence in East Timor climaxed in 1999. The year prior, Suharto’s rule had finally collapsed amid the Asian financial crisis and mounting protests. A UN agreement allowed East Timor to hold a referendum on independence, and citizens voted overwhelmingly in favor. The Indonesian army and its paramilitary supporters responded with an outpouring of violence—a final act of revenge on a people they had been unable to defeat, and a preemptive warning to other regions under the control of the Indonesian state that might dream of independence.

An estimated 1,000 people were killed, an unknown number of women and girls raped, and most of the country’s buildings and infrastructure destroyed. Hundreds of thousands were displaced. When UN peacekeepers arrived, the Indonesian army and its accomplices offered no threat to them. As Maggie O’Kane of the *Guardian* wrote, their work was “already complete. They don’t want any trouble. Why bother? East Timor has been sacked, looted and emptied.”

Other Imperatives

Kissinger once said the slaughter of hundreds of thousands in East Timor would have occurred no matter what he did. He was too modest. Suharto harbored doubts about earlier plans to invade, worrying about the attitude of the United States, on which his military depended for arms. In a 1975 cable, Australian ambassador Richard Woolcott told Canberra:

> the United States might have some influence on Indonesia at present, as Indonesia really wants and needs United States assistance in its military re-equipment program. But [US] Ambassador Newsom told me last night he is under instructions from Kissinger personally not to involve himself on the grounds that the United States is involved in enough problems of greater importance overseas at present. The State Department has, we understand, instructed the embassy to cut down its reporting on Timor.

If the United States had declined to provide the Indonesian army the weapons it needed, Suharto would have been left without allies or suppliers. An August 1975 CIA cable noted that justifying the invasion to the United States was a “major consideration” for the dictator, since he was “acutely aware” of the conditions that governed American military assistance. William Colby, CIA director in 1975, said that a US veto of the invasion would have created “a little diplomatic strain,” but without an alternative, “where would [Suharto] have gone?”

Kissinger and the US government’s choice was clear. Maintaining good ties with Suharto’s Indonesia and preventing the victory of a leftist independence movement was more important for the United States than East Timorese self-determination. Hundreds of thousands of innocent victims paid the price for that assessment.

In 2002, Xanana Gusmão, the resistance leader who served as the first president of independent East Timor, received UNESCO’s Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize. The committee awarding the prize had been chaired by none other than Henry Kissinger. At the last minute, though, Kissinger canceled his presence at the award ceremony and his speech was read by the vice president of the jury. In the speech, Kissinger commended the East Timorese resistance for struggling “amidst nations following imperatives they considered more immediate” than Timorese independence, and succeeding “against all odds—against overwhelming military power, against indifference abroad.” Which nations followed other imperatives, and which had been indifferent, the former secretary of state did not specify.

“Americans,” Kissinger wrote, “can take pride in the role their country has played in the ultimate culmination of these events.”

12

Kissinger in Cambodia

Brett S. Morris

From the mid-1960s through 1991, Cambodia suffered a devastating series of violent episodes. These included a civil war that pitted the Cambodian government against communist insurgents (the Khmer Rouge); heavy US aerial bombardment that killed thousands of civilians and destabilized the country; the genocidal rule of the Khmer Rouge, which led to the deaths of some 1.7 million people (21 percent of the population); and a decade-long Vietnamese occupation that saw continuous fighting between the Vietnamese-installed government and Khmer Rouge guerrillas (who were supported by numerous outside powers, including the United States and China).

In his roles as national security advisor and secretary of state during the Nixon and Ford administrations, Henry Kissinger bears significant responsibility for the destruction of Cambodia. It was Kissinger who administered the bombing campaign, which not only killed thousands of people (and still kills people to this day through “unexploded ordnance” [UXO]—bombs that did not detonate at the time) but also spurred the Khmer Rouge into power.

The devastation of Cambodia was intimately tied to the US campaign in Vietnam. The leader of Cambodia, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, was determined to keep his country neutral. This proved impossible. When Vietnamese communist forces began using eastern Cambodia in the mid-

1960s as a staging ground to attack the US-backed government in South Vietnam, the United States began sporadically bombing Cambodia. Sihanouk publicly denounced the bombings, though he did not favor a Vietnamese communist presence inside Cambodia, either. For a time, Sihanouk's neutralism did spare Cambodia the worst of the violence raging in neighboring Vietnam. But this all changed in 1969 when Richard Nixon came into office and, with him, Henry Kissinger.

"Anything that flies or anything that moves"

Nixon was elected on a promise to end the war—but his highest priority was to extract the United States from the conflict without losing face in the international community. As such, he wanted to take strong action against North Vietnam in order to force maximal concessions out of Hanoi. But bombing North Vietnam would prove difficult, as Nixon's predecessor, Lyndon Johnson, had ordered a halt to the bombing in 1968 as part of the peace talks that were underway with Hanoi.

The solution in Nixon and Kissinger's minds, then, was an illegal secret bombing campaign of Cambodia that would disrupt Vietnamese communist supply lines and bases located there. Secrecy was of the utmost importance—Cambodia was a neutral country, so any escalation there would trigger public backlash. Not even Congress would know, as Nixon and Kissinger were skeptical that lawmakers would authorize any bombing of Cambodia (by the time Nixon took office, most of the public had turned against the war and a substantial portion of elite opinion viewed the war as not worth the cost).

Kissinger was at the heart of these bombing operations in Cambodia. Historian Greg Grandin explains how the secret operation worked:

> Sitton [Colonel Ray Sitton, a B-52 expert], based on recommendations he received from General Creighton Abrams, the commander of military operations in Vietnam, would work up a number of targets in Cambodia to be struck. Then he would bring them to Kissinger and Haig [Colonel Alexander Haig, Kissinger's military aide] in the White House for approval. Kissinger was very hands-on, revising some of Sitton's work. "I don't know what he was using as his reason for varying them," Sitton later recalled. "Strike here in this area," Kissinger would tell him, "or strike here in that area." Once Kissinger was satisfied with the proposed target, Sitton would backchannel the coordinates to Saigon, and from there a courier would pass them on to the appropriate radar stations, where an officer would make the last minute switch. The B-52 would be diverted from its "cover" target in South Vietnam into Cambodia, where it would drop its bomb load on the real target. When the run was

> complete, the officer in charge of the deception would burn whatever documents—maps, computer printouts, radar reports, messages, and so on—that might reveal the actual flight. Then he would write up false "post-strike" paperwork, indicating that the South Vietnam sortie was flown as planned. This way, Congress and Pentagon administrators would be provided "phony target coordinates" and other forged data, so as to account for actual expenditures—of fuel, bombs, and spare parts—without ever having to reveal that Cambodia was being bombed.[1]

The bombing of Cambodia went on until 1973, when it was finally halted by Congress.

Over 500,000 tons of bombs were dropped on Cambodia between 1965 and 1973, almost all of it during Nixon and Kissinger's time in office. In Kissinger's words, the carpet bombings were supposed to be carried out against "anything that flies or anything that moves."[2] According to historian Ben Kiernan, the founding director of Yale University's Genocide Studies Program and an expert on the US bombing of Cambodia and the Khmer Rouge genocide, the bombings caused between 50,000 and 150,000 civilian deaths, though he believes "the actual toll is closer to the upper limit of that range."[3]

At the same time, Laos, just north of Cambodia, was also heavily bombed by the United States to disrupt Vietnamese communist supply lines along the Ho Chi Minh trail. Fred Branfman, a Laotian-speaking US aid worker in that country, heard reports of refugees fleeing the northern part of Laos to the capital, Vientiane. When he investigated why the refugees were fleeing, he was horrified to find out that intense US aerial bombardment had decimated entire villages, killing thousands and forcing others to live in caves for fear of the bombs. His collection of the refugees' testimony, in *Voices from the Plain of Jars: Life under an Air War*, serves as one of the best records of what it was like to survive US aerial bombardment across Indochina.

As a thirteen-year-old Laotian explained:

> My village stood on the edge of the road from Xieng Khouang to the Plain of Jars. There were rice fields next to the road. At first, the airplanes bombed the road, but not my village. At that time my life was filled with great happiness, for the mountains and forests were beautiful: land, water, and climate were suitable for us. And there were many homes in our little village. But that did not last long, because the airplanes came bombing my rice field until the bomb craters made farming impossible. And the village was hit and burned. And some relatives working in the fields came running out to the road to return to the village but the airplanes saw and shot them—killing these farmers in a most heart-rending manner. We

> heard their screams, but could not go to help them. When the airplanes left, we went out to help them, but they were already dead.[4]

Giving Rise to the Khmer Rouge

Beyond devastating the population, the bombing of Cambodia had another effect: fueling the rise of the Khmer Rouge. In 1969, Khmer Rouge forces totaled fewer than 10,000, but by 1973 they numbered 200,000. As Kiernan argues, the Khmer Rouge

> would not have won power without US economic and military destabilization of Cambodia, which … peaked in 1969–73 with the carpet bombing of Cambodia's countryside by American B-52s. This was probably the most important single factor in [Khmer Rouge leader] Pol Pot's rise.[5]

The bombings motivated peasants to join the Khmer Rouge's insurgency. "The people were very angry with the United States, and that is why so many of them joined the Khmer communists," explained one witness.[6] The CIA's Directorate of Operations reported in 1973 that Khmer Rouge forces were successfully "using damage by B-52 strikes as the main theme of their propaganda."[7]

The destabilization caused by the bombing was made worse by the US-backed coup in 1970 that overthrew Sihanouk. The United States immediately recognized Cambodia's new government, led by the right-wing Lon Nol. This had the effect of driving Sihanouk and his supporters across the country—known as "Sihanoukists"—into the Khmer Rouge's camp. North Vietnam and Vietnamese communist forces—which had previously accepted Sihanouk as the rightful ruler of Cambodia—now also fully allied themselves with the Khmer Rouge. Whatever neutrality Cambodia had maintained was gone.

The war in Cambodia came to an end in April 1975 when the Khmer Rouge seized control of Phnom Penh. They soon began emptying the cities and commenced their genocide. Kissinger's involvement, however, was not over.

Giving Pol Pot a Hand

In November 1975, Kissinger explained to the Thai foreign minister that he "should also tell the Cambodians that we will be friends with them. They are murderous thugs, but we won't let that stand in our way. We are prepared to improve relations with them."[8] The geopolitical chessboard was in flux with the conclusion of the Vietnam War. Kissinger wanted to use Cambodia as a counterweight to the victorious North Vietnamese, who were allied with the Soviet Union. At the same time, China also allied with the Khmer Rouge against its historical enemy, Vietnam. With the opening of relations between China and the United States, and the deteriorating relationship between the Soviet Union and China, a unique alliance was born: the United States and China both sought to bolster the Khmer Rouge against Vietnam (and, by extension, the Soviet Union).

Kissinger's desire for closer relations with the Khmer Rouge foreshadowed policy during the Carter and Reagan administrations. After Vietnam invaded Cambodia in late 1978 and ousted the Khmer Rouge in response to repeated incursions into Vietnamese territory, the Khmer Rouge turned to guerrilla fighting against the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh. The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia is perhaps one of the very few interventions in the post–World War II era with genuine humanitarian consequences—that is, overthrowing the Khmer Rouge. But since the intervention was not carried out by a Western government, it is not regarded as such by elite Western figures who make it their jobs to justify Washington's interventions on humanitarian grounds.[9] Determined to undercut Vietnam's influence in the region, the United States, China and numerous other outside powers chose to recognize the Khmer Rouge as the rightful government of Cambodia, providing various mechanisms of support.

Zbigniew Brzezinski (Carter's national security advisor), for example, explained that he "encourage[d] the Chinese to support Pol Pot."[10] Any attempts to describe the Khmer Rouge's actions as genocide were thus regarded as "counterproductive" by US officials until 1989, and it was not until 1997 that the United States gave the green light to capture and prosecute Pol Pot. But it was far too late. The Khmer Rouge commander died a year later without ever facing justice.

A Murderous Legacy

Other than formulating policies that supported the rise and brutal operation of the Khmer Rouge, Kissinger's legacy in Cambodia lasts in another horrifying way—unexploded bombs (UXO). Since 1979, 64,000 Cambodians have been killed or injured by unexploded bombs.[11] While some of these remnants are land mines laid by the Khmer Rouge and other factions throughout several decades of war, the United States bears a substantial portion of the blame. Even the State Department acknowledges that the "eastern and northeastern areas of Cambodia are heavily contaminated with unexploded ordnance, mostly from US air and artillery strikes during the Vietnam War."[12]

By all accounts, the death and destruction Kissinger wreaked upon Cambodia never burdened him—his public statements about the war were always full of excuses and rationalizations. For example, he claimed in 2014 that "there were fewer civilian casualties in Cambodia [from the US bombing] than there have been from American drone attacks" (a calculation that is nowhere near accurate, no matter how one measures either).[13]

Washington may mask its foreign policy objectives as noble initiatives meant to uplift the human species, but when the real result is immense suffering (as in Cambodia), figures such as Kissinger will always downplay such pain. Washington's goal in Cambodia of subverting Sihanouk's rule, bombing its countryside to weaken Vietnamese communist forces and exacting maximal concessions from North Vietnam, all in order to save face, was apparently more important in Kissinger's mind than the millions who could—and did—suffer as a result of his actions.

13

Kissinger in Vietnam and China

An Interview with Carolyn Eisenberg

Jonah Walters:
Kissinger took his first official government job in 1969, as Richard Nixon's national security advisor. What kind of administration was he sliding into?

Carolyn Eisenberg:
The war in Vietnam was the most prominent issue at the time. There was a lot of pressure on Nixon—who claimed to have a secret plan for ending the war, but didn't want to tell anyone what it was—to find some kind of resolution on that issue. So he was walking into an administration which was immediately consumed by the war.

It's relevant to note that Kissinger didn't have any governing experience at that point. He had consulted for different administrations—he had even been a consultant for peace talks in Vietnam—but he had very little idea how the government really functioned. In that one respect, it was similar to the situation with the Trump people in 2016. As far as Kissinger was concerned, the actual practice of government was not a field he paid much attention to.

That becomes quite important as he goes through those four years—not only that he's inexperienced, but also that he doesn't particularly care very much about normal procedures, which made him extremely useful to Richard Nixon. For Kissinger, there was no sense of the way things had

been done in the past, that there were precedents you had to be guided by. These kinds of things were highly relevant to Secretary of State William P. Rogers, to Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird —they were even relevant to the CIA director, Richard Helms—but they were not relevant to Kissinger. There were no norms that governed Henry Kissinger's behavior in the Nixon administration.

But despite his inexperience, Kissinger does know enough to do one clever thing: in setting up the National Security office, he is very careful from the outset to maximize his personal power. He sets up reporting relationships designed to force cabinet officers and other people to go through him in order to reach the president. Now, there is some pushback on that, but it's fair to say that when Kissinger starts out within that administration, he's already created a kind of structure which would enable him to influence policy to a degree disproportionate to his official role. From the outset he had a very high level of control.

How did he manage that? He was just a meddling Ivy Leaguer, surrounded by generals and career politicians.

With Nixon's consent he set up reporting relationships that enabled him to monitor Cabinet officials and others. As for Vietnam, when Kissinger came in, he created a comprehensive survey about Vietnam, which went out to all these different government bureaucracies. Daniel Ellsberg, who later leaked the Pentagon Papers, was a consultant on that. Using that survey, Kissinger was able to zero in on disagreements between various government agencies and personalities, and really exploit them—not only to create tension among his rivals, but to present himself to Nixon as the only person in the administration capable of managing the massive wartime bureaucracies.

Did Kissinger even have a strategy for winning Vietnam?

In the beginning, he really just deferred to the military. There was a strong feeling in the military that the North Vietnamese and the National Liberation Front (NLF) had taken a huge beating during the Tet Offensive the year before. They were exaggerating that to some degree, but it was certainly their perception that the guerrilla networks had been rounded up and a lot of fighters had died. Remember that the military still thought they could win this thing. At MACV [Military Assistance Command, Vietnam], many believed with more resources and greater freedom of action they

could end the war with a US victory. That was coming from high-ranking military officers.

This calls attention to the institutional underpinnings of the president's decisions, which sometimes people ignore by attributing everything to the personalities of Nixon or Kissinger. In a lot of ways, especially at the beginning, Nixon and Kissinger took their marching orders from the military.

The most obvious example of this is the bombing of Cambodia. People often chalk that decision up to the personal peculiarities of Nixon and his sidekick. There is a strongly argued "madman theory" that says they wanted to show the enemy they could be tough and unpredictable and to convey that message they did crazy things like bombing Cambodia unilaterally. But the military had been advocating bombing and invading Cambodia for *years*. During the Johnson administration, they had been held back by Robert McNamara. But by the time Nixon came in, the military had a free rein and more influence in the White House.

This kind of military thinking can be very powerful. You can still see this dynamic at work today, in the War on Terror —whether it's in Afghanistan or in Iraq or elsewhere, the military can exercise a huge amount of influence simply by saying, "We can win if we just do *this*, or we'll end the war if we just do *that*." I think on the left there's a tendency not to take seriously the influence of the military in shaping foreign policy. But it's there. Sometimes the commander-in-chief serves at the pleasure of his generals, not the other way around.

But what interests was the military defending? Was it just a sort of institutional inertia, keeping the war going?

I don't know if I would say it was institutional inertia … but obviously there had already been a massive effort by the military to win the war. You already had 30,000 Americans who died there, you had huge numbers of people coming back with injuries and there were half a million Americans in Vietnam at the point that Nixon takes office. So, yes, if you're a general, this is what you do—this is what your business is, to wage war and of course buy expensive weapons systems. There's always going to be a disposition in that direction, especially when you've been fighting the war for four years and so far the situation is inconclusive.

Maybe Kissinger and Nixon rethought things later, because eventually they started hating the military and blaming them for failures, but at first they were quite happy to accept that guidance. Then, by the time they can even catch their breath, 10,000 more Americans were killed in 1969, their first year in office. So as Nixon and Kissinger move into 1970, they already have to take responsibility for a huge proportion of the casualties that have occurred. And that's significant.

Take responsibility how? Neither Nixon nor Kissinger ever seemed especially concerned about loss of life.

Well, we're missing a whole side of the picture here: the role of the peace movement. On one side of it, you have a very influential military proselytizing to the president about what should be done in Vietnam. But on the other side, there was a growing, mobilized peace movement. And after Tet, suddenly this peace movement gains more credibility with the public at large, which has all kinds of political ramifications in Washington.

It certainly had a big impact on secretary of defense Melvin Laird. If you were in the peace movement in 1969, he could seem like the worst person in the world. His face was on the signs, his name was in the chants. And he clearly hated that, if only because it put his old relationships from his time in Congress in jeopardy. In reality, from practically the first minute he came in, Melvin Laird's primary concern was to get as many Americans out of Vietnam as fast as possible. I suppose you could say that reflects the influence of his family—his own kids were at peace demonstrations during this time—but it also shows the tremendous restlessness in Congress, as legislators worried about their own constituents' anger over the war issue.

Now, Kissinger didn't want to pull troops out. He didn't have the same political concerns as Laird or members of Congress. He just wanted to win, and was not overly concerned about the harm this effort would cause. Nixon was caught in the middle. He agreed with Kissinger—we have to win this war—but also acquiesced to Laird by saying, okay, we're going to start bringing troops home. It was a paradox. That's where "Vietnamization" came from—the idea that US troops would pull out slowly while building up the military in South Vietnam.

In recent years there has been a tendency for scholars to minimize the role of the peace movement. But it was a big part of the reason Nixon listened to Laird and some members of Congress, even though Kissinger

didn’t want to. The president was very, very worried about the American public and how people were going to respond. If you were in the peace movement, the whole idea of Vietnamization seemed a total fraud.

It certainly seemed that way to me. We couldn’t stand hearing people say Nixon was ending the war by bringing some troops home. He was expanding the war, bombing and sending troops to Cambodia in 1970 and Laos in 1971. But in fact the steady withdrawal of US troops from the summer of 1969 on was enormously consequential. Because by the time we got to 1973, there were almost no boots on the ground—which made signing a peace treaty not only feasible but necessary.

The Vietnam War was a great tragedy, a huge waste of human life—no getting around that. But in reality, it would have been a whole lot worse if there were not a mobilized citizenry in the United States. The peace movement created a situation in which the Nixon Administration was forced to end the war. It should be added, as well, that the extraordinary discipline and dedication of enemy forces made its continuation extraordinarily costly.

A striking experience: when I was working on my book, I did a couple of phone interviews with Melvin Laird. I didn’t tell him much about what we were going to talk about, but he agreed to talk to me. On our first phone call, the very first thing he says is, “Do you know how many American kids I got out of that place?” First sentence!

His outlook illustrates the internal conflict—that during those years there was a policy being driven by the military, on one hand, and a policy being driven by the peace movement, on the other. And Kissinger’s thinking—which was certainly not stupid, only cynical—was to keep the war going long enough to negotiate secretly and get an agreement, if only to ensure that the United States didn’t lose too much ground in Asia.

I want to say one other thing about Kissinger during this period. I mentioned that when he was setting up the NSC he created structures that marginalized other players in the administration. But forget about formal structures for a moment. Another thing that happened is that Kissinger tightened his personal bond with Nixon. Kissinger constantly plotted to weaken and discredit the other relevant people around him and the president. In the course of doing so, he accumulated tremendous personal power.

People still talk about Kissinger as this traditional cold warrior—well, he was until he wasn't. Truthfully, Nixon had more of a vision than Kissinger did. The fact is that Kissinger was simply able to worm his way around all of these other people in the administration because he was willing to indulge those qualities of Nixon that others were not, including his grandiosity, jealousy and rage. He could make himself useful to Nixon in a way that other people couldn't, because they had institutions they represented. Kissinger didn't represent anything except himself—and *maybe* the Harvard clique of pro-war intellectual elites that, even then, was shrinking and fragmenting under the pressure of the war.

But he must have had some motivation of his own, right? What about his allegiances outside of government?

On that item, my views have changed after reading the documents. During that period, I was a graduate student at Columbia, and I can remember a ton of conversations about Kissinger. Among peace activists, we were quick to point out how Kissinger was tight with the Rockefellers; he's a pawn, they hired him to do their dirty work, et cetera. Obviously, that was exaggerated. It's true that Kissinger was, in some ways, a political face of the cohort of upper-crust East Coasters—including the Rockefellers—who orbited Harvard and Wall Street and Washington. But that group was hardly a unified political entity with a consistent program. And the Vietnam War, as it went on, threw that group into confusion.

This more complex relationship can be seen in the transcripts of Kissinger's telephone calls and talks to business groups. In at least one conversation with David Rockefeller (I think it was after Cambodia), Rockefeller keeps saying, "Henry, this is bad." But Kissinger keeps telling him, in effect, "This is going to work out fine; Nixon knows what he's doing." Remember, for people like the Rockefellers, who were very tied into elite colleges and universities, there was a lot of restlessness. They couldn't go to a Yale graduation without it getting disrupted.

There's one very dramatic moment I wrote about in my book—just a little story, but to me it's very symbolic. One of the students who was killed at Kent State was from Long Island. He was shot during the first week of May. The funeral was a Friday, and that Sunday was Mother's Day. And, interestingly, who spends Mother's Day with the boy's mother? *Nelson*

Rockefeller. His condition of going there was that there would be no publicity at all—he just went and spent the day with her.

During this time, Rockefeller was talking to Kissinger every day, but he never told Kissinger that he went to visit that household. Then, the next day, on the Monday after Mother's Day, Nelson Rockefeller spoke out against the war. He later backpedaled a thousand times, of course, but it just highlights the ambivalence of the business community, or at least a certain wing of it. At some point, the alienation of young people became so intense that it became a factor for the economic elite, as well. When Kissinger gave occasional talks to business groups, he was selling the war to them, they weren't selling the war to him.

So, the civilian leadership of the Defense Department wants its soldiers out, the business community is vacillating, the antiwar movement is scaring the hell out of the president … What's the final straw for Nixon and Kissinger? What finally breaks the war effort?

A critical moment in this process is the spring of 1971. That's when thousands of South Vietnamese troops were sent into Laos in a campaign called Lam Son 719. They were supposed to get to the crossroads town of Tchepone, stay there for two months, and kill enough people and disrupt enough supply routes that there could not be an offensive in 1972, because that was when Nixon would be up for reelection. Now, American ground troops can't enter Laos, because of a congressional restriction—all they can do is escort South Vietnamese troops to the border—but the Americans use a tremendous amount of airpower and artillery to back up the campaign.

Nixon and Kissinger saw this as their last chance to end the war on their terms. But the whole thing was a total failure, to the absolute mortification of Nixon and Kissinger. Casualties were so heavy that the government of South Vietnam pulled its troops out after just a few weeks. Soldiers on the ground were so desperate to leave that some of them clung to American helicopters as they flew off—it was chaos, South Vietnamese soldiers trying to flee Laos. The television cameras picked up on this, of course, showing pictures of those troops retreating back into South Vietnam. It was a nightmare for the White House, especially since they'd been pushing this whole Vietnamization thing as their exit plan.

Remember, this was 1971. It was a very dramatic time, on all sides. The veterans' protests in the United States were becoming larger and more

visible. John Kerry testified in Congress before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Vets were up on Capitol Hill throwing away their medals. It was the worst moment for the White House since Nixon took office.

This debacle was at a turning point, and ultimately led to Nixon and Kissinger accepting a relatively unfavorable peace agreement in 1973. But the South Vietnamese failure to hold Tchepone—which showed Vietnamization to be a joke, and all but guaranteed there'd be a major North Vietnamese offensive in 1972—also shaped the White House's diplomacy with China in very profound ways.

Nixon is famous for being the first president to visit the People's Republic of China in 1972. And he traveled with his sidekick in tow. It's one of the weirder episodes in twentieth-century diplomatic history—Kissinger and Mao reportedly drank whiskey together, while Kissinger and Zhou Enlai discussed continental philosophy in the evenings. Or so it was said. How did that visit come about?

There had been a lot of discussion during the Johnson years, including by Nixon himself, about the need to change the White House's relationship with the People's Republic of China. It had become absurd that the United States was pretending it didn't exist. So from the time that Nixon took office, some members of his administration had put out feelers to the Chinese about an opening. But then the United States invaded Cambodia. Things froze, and Nixon's overture to China, which had looked like it was going to bear fruit, suddenly failed.

Then, in 1971, the American ping-pong team was invited to China, and their visit went well. Soon after, Mao sent a message making it clear that China was prepared to welcome an American emissary. Nixon and Kissinger were ecstatic; it was like receiving a coveted invitation to the senior prom. Kissinger saw right away that this could be fantastic for Nixon—he would go visit China, it would make a splash in the media, it would resurrect the administration's public image. As Kissinger said to Nixon more than once, "This will take Vietnam off the front pages."

The second advantage, which both Nixon and Kissinger see right away, is that an opening with China will put pressure on the Soviet Union to be more forthcoming on a variety of issues. The president really wanted a summit in Moscow, especially before the reelection campaign. Kissinger

and Nixon thought the China opening and possible presidential trip to Beijing might compel the Russians to accept a summit. And they also thought, if things went *really* well, maybe China could help them to get an acceptable peace treaty with Hanoi. This was the beginning of an idea that would get bigger and bigger until January 1973, when the peace agreement with Hanoi was finally signed: *how can the Chinese help with this?*

But in July of 1972, when he and Zhou had their first meeting, Kissinger's main concern was marginalizing the State Department. Not just Rogers, but the whole State Department. He didn't want them to know what he was saying. There was a very high premium on secrecy. Kissinger even developed the habit of only using a Chinese translator. He thought secrecy was indispensable, even between government offices. The American "bureaucracy" would only interfere with his "great power diplomacy"—that was his philosophy. In a prefiguration of Donald Trump, he told Zhou Enlai that his problem with the "bureaucracy" was similar to the problem the Chinese government faced.

You mentioned that the Lam Son debacle impacted the administration's dealings with China. Can you elaborate?

Throughout his time in office, Nixon's need for something positive to happen in Vietnam shaped his diplomacy with the Chinese. At first, he just needed distractions. That meant visits to China, television crews at the Great Wall, et cetera—Nixon and Kissinger got fantastic mileage out of spectacles like these. But as time went on and the situation became more desperate, they tried to get China—and the USSR, to an even greater extent—to help them pressure Hanoi to accept their terms for ending the war.

Kissinger led this effort, making promises to China that he kept from the State Department. The way he behaved in these negotiations was actually pretty shocking. If the American public back then could have seen some of these transcripts, they would have been amazed. They're just so absurd.

This was Kissinger's importance: he had no principles whatsoever. If American kids are dying, it didn't make any difference to him. If POW wives are in anguish because they want their husbands released, he didn't care. If thousands of people get killed in Pakistan, it wasn't going to bother him, as long as it brought him closer to some abstract diplomatic goal with the Chinese. Other people in the government actually get bothered by these

things. But as for Kissinger, he was just the implementer. There doesn't seem to ever be a single human situation in all of the Vietnam-related transcripts to suggest that he had qualms about people dying or suffering.

Ultimately, though, Kissinger ended up taking some flak for this, right? His opponents in the GOP were able to outflank him on the right, calling him untrustworthy because of his relative friendliness with the Chinese and what they viewed as his "appeasement" of the Soviets.
Well, what Kissinger did with the Soviets was to intervene in the arms control negotiations. Behind the scenes, he essentially took them over. There was an official delegation in Helsinki doing this work, and Kissinger didn't bother to tell them he had a parallel negotiation going on in Washington. To people like Ronald Reagan, who became one of Kissinger's biggest detractors later on, this looked like selling out the United States. To summarize a complex subject: the final arms control deal with Moscow, which Kissinger had largely engineered, put the United States in a somewhat disadvantaged position on offensive nuclear weapons like intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). Many experts defended this agreement—known by the acronym SALT, for Strategic Arms Limitation Talks—saying the particular numbers didn't matter. But others at the time viewed it as a sellout. Some of those others, like Paul Nitze, would later become strong opponents of arms control.

But it's important to understand how all these diplomatic spectacles with the communist superpowers completely undermined the popular justification for the war in Vietnam. And it wasn't just China. Nixon spent hours and hours with Brezhnev, too. He even went to Moscow and addressed the Soviet people.

Have you heard of poor little Tanya? There was this little girl, Tanya, in Leningrad during World War II, whose diary ended up in a museum there. In this diary, she recorded how everyone in her family was dying from starvation. Her last entry says something like, "Today my mother died and now only Tanya is left." So, in 1972, when Nixon went to the Soviet Union, he visited the museum where the diary was kept. On the wall of the museum it said that Tanya had died four months after that final entry. Then, Nixon delivered this incredibly emotional address to the Soviet people about all the Tanyas of the world and how we should all work together to

prevent the Tanyas of the future from experiencing this cruel fate and so forth.

But you have to understand that Nixon was making this speech at the same time that the war in South Vietnam and Cambodia was raging out of control, with American B-52s and fighter-bombers striking these places, as well as North Vietnam. So, on the home front, there was a kind of dissociation taking place. The American public was conditioned to think of Vietnam as a war to stop the Soviets from taking over the world. Meanwhile, it seemed like the president was getting along with the USSR just fine. So the question became, "Why are you still killing American kids in Vietnam?" And what about *our* Tanyas, the North Vietnamese negotiators inquire? It was very sobering.

I have one more question for you, Carolyn. You hear a lot of people, on the right and on the left, say that we're living in the world Kissinger built—that Kissinger ushered in a new paradigm in American foreign policy. What do you think of that?

I don't entirely agree. Kissinger would have certainly made that claim. But when you read his books, there is a tremendous amount of pretentiousness—a habit of dressing up unoriginal ideas to sound like a new conceptual framework.

But I do think that Kissinger's disposition to favor military force had effects that continue to reverberate. We see this in many situations, including his absolutely terrible advice to George W. Bush about Iraq, many years later. There was always a militaristic edge to him, but crucially that militarism was always directed at lesser powers—small, relatively weak countries. I guess that did set a tone for what came after. But that's hardly a new paradigm.

This is what we should be really concerned about: somehow, amid this whole mess of swirling interests and priorities, with a hot war in Vietnam and a Cold War everywhere else and an antiwar movement at home, the US government solidified its identity as a national security state. I don't know if we can really call that a *transformation*—probably not—but it was a kind of hardening of a preexisting condition. A national security state involves an obsession with threats, a mistrust of the public, a strengthening of the Executive—all things that should be intensely familiar to us today.

One of the dangers of a national security state is that it ultimately empowers people like Nixon and Kissinger—who may be lacking any kind of moral compass—to make hugely consequential decisions, almost unilaterally, even when there is no democratic mandate. The two were embedded in a whole network of national security institutions. Yes, there were people at the lower levels—Daniel Ellsberg is an example—who opposed the president, who went home to their families every night anguished by what was happening, and some of them quit. But for the most part, government officials behaved as “enablers,” rendering Nixon and Kissinger almost untouchable.

14

From the War Room to Wall Street

Christy Thornton

The scourge of the international investor is uncertainty: the inability to predict the social, political or economic future in a country halfway around the world increases the risk of investing there, and therefore raises the cost of borrowing for or insuring a given venture. How, then, does a firm hedge against an unknowable future in some far-flung corner of the globe? It turns to the expert, the consultant, the analyst, who provides the intelligence that will assure the board of directors, calm the skeptical lender and still the shaking hand of the insurance broker. In fact, risk consulting has itself become a multibillion dollar industry, metastasizing within a larger financial economy sick with securities and derivatives of increasing complexity. But even as the risk consulting industry has grown, there was, for decades, one expert par excellence to whom the titans of industry turned: Henry Kissinger.

After leaving the State Department in 1977, Kissinger maintained his position as a commentator and a confidant to those in power. But while the continued clamor from the political classes for his advice and counsel has no doubt stroked his voluble ego, it was the handsomely paid advice he provided to the business class that made Kissinger a rich man. The former secretary of state founded his consulting firm, Kissinger Associates, in New York City in 1982, waiting what he considered to be a prudent five years after leaving office before peddling his expertise to business leaders. When

he was in power, his promotion of US business interests was straightforward: he encouraged the sale of massive amounts of US-manufactured arms to Iran and Saudi Arabia, for instance, and supported the overthrow of Salvador Allende, the democratically elected president of Chile, which happened to be in the interest of PepsiCo and the telecom giant ITT. Once out of office, his hands were no longer on such direct levers of power. But he did possess a vast store of expertise on global affairs, a unique window into the workings of the US government and its global counterparts. And for that, it quickly became clear, corporations across a range of industries would pay well.

Among Kissinger Associates' clients in the 1980s and 1990s were massive banking and insurance firms like AIG, American Express and Chase Manhattan. But Kissinger also worked with consumer giants like Heinz, Anheuser-Busch, Coca-Cola and Revlon; automobile manufacturers like Volvo and Fiat; telecom companies like ITT, GTE, Bell Telephone of Belgium and Ericsson; as well as global mining, petroleum, engineering and construction companies like Freeport-McMoRan, Hunt Oil and Union Carbide. According to biographer Walter Isaacson, in the early 1990s, a company might typically pay Kissinger Associates a retainer of some $200,000 for a yearly contract.[1] For this fee, Kissinger and his team would be available for regular telephone consultations about current events and would provide a full briefing—always orally and in person, never leaving a paper trail—two to three times a year. If a company sought more specialized help, such as opening doors for government approval in some foreign country, that would cost an additional $100,000 a month, plus expenses. This was a very lucrative venture. To open the office in 1982, Kissinger had borrowed $350,000 from a consortium of banks including Goldman Sachs, and though the term of the loan was five years, he repaid in full within the first two. By the early 1990s, the firm's revenues were close to $10 million a year.

But beyond padding Kissinger's personal portfolio, his consulting work was crucial in spreading the advance of neoliberal economic policy around the globe. The auspicious beginnings of Kissinger Associates in 1982, a year of serious global financial crisis—and therefore opportunity for capitalist interests—demonstrate just how implicated Henry Kissinger was in advancing this new set of economic priorities. After the Mexican government announced in August of 1982 that it would be unable to make

payments on its outstanding foreign debt, and some forty other countries followed suit and announced their own defaults, there were widespread fears of a systemic collapse of the financial sector. In response, the IMF and the US government devised rescue packages that would restructure the commercial debt of countries like Mexico. Much of this debt was owed to the largest banks in the United States, such as Chase Manhattan, JP Morgan, Citicorp and American Express—many of which were clients of Kissinger Associates. In addition to advising these firms directly during the debt crisis, Kissinger used his public platform, including newspaper columns and interviews on major news networks, to advocate for debt relief structures that would be particularly advantageous for his clients. He argued, for example, that the banks themselves shouldn't have to shoulder the full weight of the defaults; rather, the governments of the United States and the other creditor nations should have to carry some of the burden of restructuring. This was a classic tenet of neoliberal policy: privatize the profits, but socialize the risk. Throughout the 1980s, Kissinger advocated it loudly in the media without disclosing his financial ties to firms that would profit from such a strategy.

At the same time, Kissinger helped to advise firms on how to take advantage of the various economic reforms upon which this kind of debt relief became conditional, making sure that his clients were well positioned as structural adjustment resulted in the selling off of state assets and the opening of new markets to foreign investment. The 1990s brought a bonanza of privatization and deregulation in so-called "emerging markets" in Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America, and Kissinger's clients in manufacturing, telecommunications, engineering, mining and petroleum turned to him to open doors in places where he had particularly valuable contacts: Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping, for example, and Mexican President Carlos Salinas were among his personal acquaintances. Kissinger could, therefore, bring AIG's Hank Greenberg to lunch with Deng in Beijing, for example, while AIG was building a new headquarters in Shanghai. Or he could have Robert Day, the chairman of Trust Company of the West—a huge Los Angeles–based investment firm—visit him at his vacation home in Acapulco, from which they could pop over to Mexico City in Day's private jet, where Kissinger was working on a deal for the company to invest in the formerly state-owned Mexican telephone system. (In the end, they were outbid by Carlos Slim, the Mexican billionaire who

rode the privatization of Mexican telecoms to a spot near the top of the *Forbes* billionaire list.) Mexico alone sold off thousands of state-owned enterprises in the 1980s and early 1990s, costing hundreds of thousands of jobs but proving to be what the World Bank hailed as a "model" for other developing countries.[2] And in this model, Kissinger was a constant presence.

Kissinger's associates were, then, not just friends in high places: they were finance ministers and heads of state committed to the economic liberalization of their "emerging" countries, as well as the founders and CEOs of multinational firms poised to take advantage of that liberalization. In bringing together sellers and buyers, markets and investors, autocrats and capitalists, Kissinger played an outsized role in the rapid advancement of neoliberalism around the world. This role is one of the crucial and often overlooked aspects of the way in which the spread of neoliberalism over the last four decades has advanced: through the concerted action of states and their representatives. Even as an individual, Kissinger always carried the imprimatur of government—out of power, he remained *Secretary* Kissinger. He advocated in his own interest, to be sure, but advised his clients on the intentions and policies of the US government, as well as governments overseas. In fact, many of the staff of Kissinger Associates over the years—such as Brent Scowcroft, Lawrence Eagleburger, L. Paul Bremer, Timothy Geithner and Bill Richardson—have cycled in or out of the firm as they left and then returned to government positions. This closeness to the state is a large part of what Kissinger Associates sells, and tracing the history of the firm helps us to trace how the role of the state in the management of global capitalism has changed over the years.

Tracing this role is not easy, as the client list for the firm remains a closely guarded secret. The question of just who were the former secretary's associates surged into the spotlight when George W. Bush named Kissinger the chair of the independent commission created to investigate the September 11 terrorist attacks. Congressional Democrats insisted that to prove there were no conflicts of interest, he had to disclose the client list for Kissinger Associates; he resigned the post rather than do so. Despite this secrecy, however, the firm has publicly entered into a number of "strategic partnerships" in recent years. These include links with some of the country's biggest financial firms, including, since 2002, AIG and the Blackstone Group, the private equity house run by Pete Peterson, who had

been secretary of commerce under Nixon.[3] This followed the announcement in 2000 of a partnership with Hakluyt & Company, a management consultancy created and run by former spies with the British intelligence agency MI6.[4] Hakluyt has been implicated in spying on environmental activist groups such as Greenpeace on behalf of clients like Royal Dutch Shell and British Petroleum.[5] Perhaps because of the scrutiny that Kissinger Associates and strategic partners like Hakluyt experienced following the uproar over the 9/11 Commission, Kissinger partnered in 2004 with the public relations firm APCO Worldwide, which handles PR for clients involved in sensitive political or reputational crises.[6] Around the same time, Kissinger also announced a partnership with the DC-based corporate law firm Covington & Burling, which has represented clients such as Philip Morris, Halliburton, Chiquita and Blackwater (Xe).[7] To best serve corporate clients, then, Kissinger Associates is now partnered with some of the world's biggest and most important investing, insurance, intelligence, PR and law firms. As the global economy has become more complicated, so, too, has Kissinger's business.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Kissinger Associates has been closely tied to more recent geopolitical and economic crises, as well. After the collapse of Lehman Brothers in the 2008 financial crisis, Kissinger Associates snapped up Lehman's former head of sovereign risk, Jami Miscik, and installed her as president and vice chair. But it wasn't just her background at Lehman that made her Kissinger material. Prior to her time at the failed investment firm, Miscik spent more than two decades in intelligence, culminating in her appointment as the CIA's deputy director of intelligence from 2002 to 2005—during which time she was responsible for the intelligence with which the Bush administration made the case for the war in Iraq.[8] These, it should be noted, were not ordinary stints in government and finance: they were positions in two of the most disastrous episodes in recent geopolitical and economic history. But where others saw crisis and challenge, Kissinger demonstrated that he saw opportunity, installing Miscik to sit at the nexus between government and finance that is Kissinger Associates.

The times are nothing if not uncertain; and where there is uncertainty, Kissinger's company is indispensable to the interests of global capital.

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Notes

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